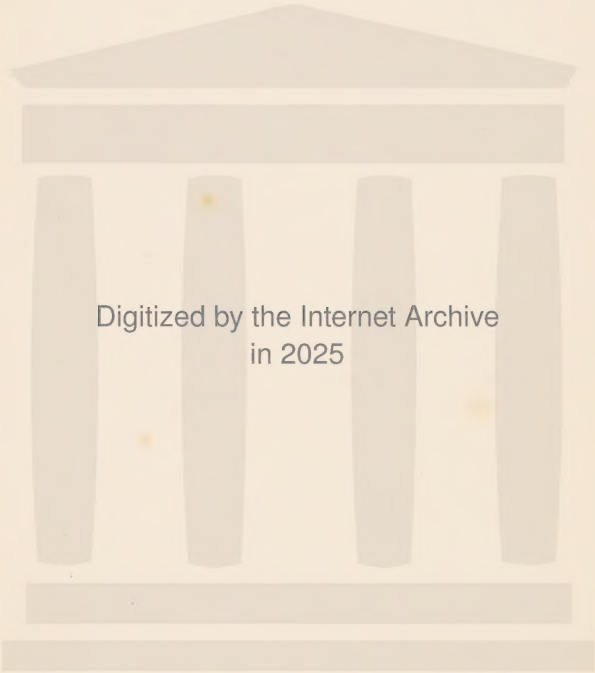
The Gaverocks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THE GAVEROCKS

VOL. II.

THE GAVEROCKS

A TALE OF THE CORNISH COAST

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING' 'MEHALAH' &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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THE GAVEROCKS.

CHAPTER XXII.

RETURN.

'I EXPECT them back to-day,' said old Gaverock; 'and high time they were home—only spending money and idling. What the advantage of a honeymoon is I never could see. It is a cruel institution, for it makes a young couple sick of each other's society, whereas, if they were at home, and had their daily duties to attend to, they would have something else to think of than each other's shortcomings.'

'At what o'clock do you expect them?' asked Dennis.

'I cannot tell. They take post-horses from St. Columb. They have been spending their month in Truro; or rather on the outskirts. Rose has a house in Kenwyn, about a mile out-

side. If it had been in Truro, it might have been let ; but there has been no tenant found for it all the while she has been here, so she has been out of pocket, had to put in a couple, as caretakers, at so much per week, whereas if let money would have come in. That comes of leaving it in the hands of lawyers. I don't believe that any trouble has been taken to let the house. I suppose they make something out of it—got some understanding with the man I have put in the house to keep it. But what is one to do—at a distance? I can't run about searching for tenants. I want to sell the place, and I will do so.'

'But does—does your daughter-in-law wish it? She was born in the Kenwyn house; it is associated with her childhood and happiest recollections.'

'If she does not like it, she may lump it. I do not see the fun of paying a salary to a caretaker, and having house and furniture deteriorate, whereas the money for which it was sold could be well expended here. If she is a fool and don't see that, I pity her.'

'You wish the young people to live here with you?' asked Dennis.

'Wish—choose,' answered the Squire. 'Hark! there they are.'

He rose and walked to the porch. Penhalligan hung back, a spasm of pain came over him, and drops stood on his brow.

The old man boisterously welcomed his son and Rose, and shouted to the post-boy to go round to the kitchen and regale himself.

'Come in, come in!' he roared. 'That is right—glad to return to Towan; utterly tired of each other; ready to take off your coats and be at work. Heigh! Gerans, the mare has foaled. Poor Buttercup! we nearly lost her in milk fever. I haven't been out in the "Mermaid" since you left. Come in: here is Mr. Penhalligan, run up to welcome you, and see how you both look. Last time we saw you, you were like two ring-doves. Have you begun to peck out each other's feathers yet?'

Gerans went up at once to Dennis, with his hand extended, and his honest face radiant with good-nature. 'Glad to see you, old fellow,' he said wringing his hand. 'How is Loveday? Is she here?'

'I should have thought,' said Rose, some-

what sharply, 'that a dutiful son's first thought should have been of his mother.'

'How is my mother?' asked the docile Gerans, turning to his father.

'All right; never was better—except for fancies. Thinks herself ill, imagines an ache in a rib—there it is; then in her toe, and the obedient ache flies thither; and so it dances all over her body in attendance on her fancies. Is it not so, Penhalligan? No—of course you will not admit it; any more than a parson will admit we are not all miserable sinners in need of tinkering into tolerable Christians.'

Rose, on entering, had given Dennis a very cool salutation, but when she heard her inconsiderate husband rush into inquiries after Loveday she changed her mind, and greeted him with considerable cordiality, hoping thereby to make Gerans jealous. But Gerans was without a spark of suspicion in him. 'That is right,' he said; 'glad to see you welcome our friend cordially.' Rose looked at him to see if he were in earnest; when she saw that he was—pouted, and went off to her room.

'Well, Dennis,' said the unconscious Gerans, 'very pleased to see you again, and only wish

you had something as bright to cheer you as I have. I hope you have been here often to enliven my father. Father, I suppose you have wanted me home?'

'Oh, yes,' answered the old man. 'I had to sit up with Buttercup all night, and give her gruel, because you were not here. Can't trust Tom Geake. Can't trust anyone, now I have lost old Tregellas. Geake will promise everything, but performance is a limping leg that don't keep pace with promise. Lord bless me!' exclaimed old Gaverock, 'I've had to be master and mistress together, and order dinner and keep the maidens in discipline. Mother can't or won't get about, and there would have been riot and waste if I had not looked to everything. Now Rose is here, she shall be housekeeper. I found the maidens in the kitchen had been using the silver, and sending me the plated forks and spoons. I found that out because I saw a silver spoon in the pig's trough and inquired how it had got there.'

'You will stay and sup with us, Dennis?' said Gerans, arresting the doctor as he was taking his hat. 'Come, on my return you must be neighbourly.'

'I had rather go home,' answered Penhalligan; 'Loveday will be expecting me.'

'I will send a boy down to ask Loveday to come up,' said Gerans. 'Do stay, and hear what we have seen and done. It is a real pleasure to meet you again. Rose has been among her acquaintances, but they were all strangers to me. I am rejoiced to meet an old friend once more. Do stay, Dennis. Rose will like it also. Now excuse me—I must run upstairs and see my mother.'

'Stay, Penhalligan, I wish it,' ordered the Squire. 'I must go out and see that the post-boy has put the horses in the proper stalls, and that some cider has been drawn for him. The maidens one day drew me a jug of lamp-oil for my dinner. I went into the kitchen myself in a pretty state of tempest, and found that they were drinking a bottle of my best claret. Stay here, Penhalligan, till I come back.' He went to the door, then returned, and said, 'High time Rose should be here. Will you believe me? I thought my nightcap was very damp, and yesterday found the chambermaid wiping out the basins with it.' Then he went away.

The glimpse Dennis had had of Rose on her

arrival, flushed with excitement at her return to Towan, sufficed to show that her beauty was heightened, and to revive in him the fire that was slowly consuming his heart.

He could not, and he did not, believe that she loved Gerans. She had sneered at him only a few days before she accepted him. His jealous eye had not observed in her any of the tokens of love. What had been Rose's answer to himself when he told her of his passion? That he was too late. Too late might well be an expression of regret that she had accepted a man for whom she did not care, in ignorance that she was loved by another for whom she had a regard. To the jaundiced eye of Dennis, Gerans was undeserving of her respect. His good-nature was stupidity; his submission to his father, mean spiritedness. He had recognised his good qualities before, now he disputed them all. How could a bright, intelligent girl like Rose love a boor? She must despise him, and regret that she was yoked to him.

As he thus thought, with knitted brow, by the hearth, Rose entered. On observing him, she resumed her distant behaviour. She was in a somewhat ruffled mood, and vexed at

seeing him there. She did not forget that he was a rejected lover.

'I hope Loveday is well,' she said coldly.

'She is very well; she will be here directly.'

'Indeed! Does she know I am returned?'

'Gerans has sent a boy down to tell her to come up.'

Rose frowned. She did not speak for a moment. After a while she said, 'Gerans is inconsiderate and selfish. This is your sister's day for ironing, as I know. She must not be dragged away from her work. I am provoked at the thoughtlessness of Gerans. I will run down to-morrow morning and see her.'

'You wish me to stop the messenger?'

'Stop Gerans's messenger to Loveday! By all means'—she turned her head—'if he is not gone already.'

Dennis went out. When he returned he was accompanied by the Squire.

'Well, Rose!' shouted the latter. 'Very glad to have you here. Been quite lost without you. Mother has given up in a foolish despondent way, and there is no rousing her. I have had to see to everything and been driven distracted by the maidens. They have run to the

store cupboard as they liked, and eaten all the sugar: first the lump, then the moist. I had none for my toddy last night. When I found there was no sugar I took a pot of honey, and discovered finger impressions in that. How have you enjoyed yourself?'

'Very well, uncle,' answered Rose, hardly recovered from her irritation. 'You see I was among old scenes and old friends at Truro.'

'Did you find a tenant for the house?'

'No,' answered Rose, airily, 'we did not trouble to look for one.'

'Why not? I expressly commanded Gerans to do so.'

'I did not wish it,' said Rose, 'and I forbade Gerans to move.'

'Indeed! And pray why?'

'I think it not unlikely we may go there again.'

'Not this year. You have had your jaunt with Gerans, and I can spare neither of you. The maidens have nearly driven me mad. Do you know that, having worn out the leather of the knife-board, they took and adapted one of the legs of my hunting breeches? No, no, Rose, here you stay and keep house for me.'

'But, uncle——'

'Rose,' said the old man peremptorily, 'I will it. Consider, you are paying fifty pounds in rates and for carekeepers for your house at Kenwyn, and it might be let for a hundred, and the tenant pay all outs. A hundred in pocket, instead of fifty out. Do you understand?'

'I think it not improbable that Gerans and I will settle there, instead of living with you at Towan.'

Old Gaverock burst out laughing.

'What is there absurd in this?' asked Rose, with heightened colour. 'I like Truro. I am known there. It is not a desert. There are plenty of friends about Kenwyn.'

'Have done,' said the old man roughly; 'enough that I don't choose it.'

'But perhaps I may wish it,' said Rose; 'I presume I have a voice in the matter.'

'This is soon settled,' exclaimed Gaverock, indignant at her opposition. 'I shall sell the house.'

Rose fired up. '*My* home! You cannot. You shall not.'

'Cannot and shall not are strong words,'

said the Squire, 'and need justification. I am your trustee, and I shall act as I think proper.'

'But Gerans——' began Rose, with tears rising to her eyes.

'Gerans has no will but mine,' answered old Gaverock.

Through the month of her absence Rose had been resolving to try her strength against her father-in-law. She considered that it would be impossible for her to live happily in Towan if the old man were allowed to rule unopposed. He must be taught that other wills had to be considered beside his own. She had spoken to her husband on the subject, but had met with no encouragement. 'My father is a very clever man,' said Gerans; 'it will not do to oppose him. He never has met with resistance. Besides, he always knows better than anyone else—than you or I—what ought to be done.'

Rose had brought her opposition to the point just described when her husband came in. She felt her own weakness and need of help, so she turned eagerly to him. 'Gerans,' she said, 'I have just told your father that we

are not going to live at Towan, and may go back to Kenwyn——'

'And he has pooh-poohed her,' said the old man.

'I will not be pooh-poohed!' exclaimed Rose. 'I like my old home, and I will not allow it to be sold.'

'Who talks of selling it?' said Gerans.

'Your father.'

'He has good reasons, doubtless.'

'He shall not do it. It is my home. I love it.'

Then Rose burst into tears. Gerans looked undecidedly from his wife to his father.

'I think,' said Dennis, 'that it will not do to sell, at any rate at present. Mining interest is down. There is no money circulating, but this will not be for long. House property about Truro is certain to rise in value. I have heard that land suitable for building purposes has gone up five-and-thirty per cent. within the last twenty years, and it is likely to become more valuable every year. Just now there is depression, and it would be a vast pity to sell at a moment when you would get a poor price. Keep till better times; and in the

meantime you may come to reconsider your determination.'

'Thank you,' said Rose.

'There is something in this,' acquiesced old Gaverock. 'Very well, Rose. I won't sell just at present. I'll think about it, and wait for better times.'

Rose turned with a flushed face towards her husband, and some words trembled on her lips, but she controlled herself and did not speak them. Penhalligan saw her, and guessed what was passing in her mind.

When she and Gerans were alone together she burst forth with, 'This is intolerable! You dare not raise a word in my favour. You would let your father play ducks and drakes with my money, and rub your hands and applaud.'

'My dear Rose, you are mistaken. My father will do the best possible for you.'

'I do not care whether he meditates good or bad. I want to have things done as you and I choose, not as he wills.'

'You are unreasonable, Rose.'

'I may be. I do not care. I want, and will have, my own way, whether reasonable

or not. Why do you not take my part? Why must I be beholden to Mr. Penhalligan for support? You are my natural protector, and you stand like a sheep by my side and bleat Ah! when the old ram calls Baa!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIVE-AND-TWENTY POUNDS.

When Dennis Penhalligan came home to Nantsillan, that evening, he scarcely spoke to his sister. She thought he looked haggard and miserable—more so than usual. He walked straight to the piano, opened it and began to play. After waiting for him to cease, she went to him, laid her hand lightly on his shoulder, stooped, and kissed his brow.

'It is late, Dennis. I am going to bed. Is there anything you would like to eat or drink that I can fetch you? Little Ruth has gone to roost three hours ago.'

He shook off her hand impatiently.

'You will not remain up long,' she said. 'You want sleep as much as a child.'

'Do you grudge me my only pleasure?' he asked impatiently. 'I am parting from my best solace.'

'What do you mean, Dennis?'

'I am going to sell the piano.'

'You shall not do that. No, Dennis, indeed you shall not.'

'It cannot be helped. If we eat, we must pay for our food. We cannot live without food, and we can live without music.'

'Oh, Dennis, dear brother! It was mamma's instrument. Her sweet influence will pass away, it almost seems, if the piano goes. When you are unhappy, and vexed about money, and other troubles, you fly to this, and find comfort in its music.'

'Yes,' he said, 'that is just why it must go.'

'I do not agree with you.'

'I must be robbed and bereaved of everything,' he said. 'Do you know who will buy it? Old Anthony Loveys—because his wife is talking of a dance, and their harpsichord is worn out. He will give five-and-twenty pounds for the instrument.'

'Dennis, it cost a hundred and fifty.'

'We must take what we can get.'

'Oh, my brother, what would you do without your piano? It is necessary to your happiness.'

'I have no happiness—as beggared of that as of cash.'

'You must not be deprived of it. You would never, nowhere, be able to get one as cheap, and—it is so good. Why do you not ask Mr. Gaverock to lend you the money?'

Dennis shook his head.

'You are too proud,' she said timidly.

'I do not see my way to being able to repay the money. What prospect is there of this practice improving? What chance is there of farmers being more ready to pay for medical attendance? The poor call me in, and I must take my pay as I can, in pence.'

Loveday sighed. She kissed him again, and withdrew, not to sleep, but to think.

The state of poverty in which they were was becoming distressing. Dennis did not make way in the neighbourhood; his gloomy temper, morbid and touchy, did not conciliate goodwill, and his rigid conscientiousness dissatisfied patients who wanted to be thought and to think themselves ill. His pride stood in the way of success. He would make no effort to be popular, because he would not conciliate the good opinion of persons whose opinion he con-

sidered not worth having. Perhaps the only individual who got on with him and whom he did not repel was Squire Gaverock. The Squire was so rough himself, that he appreciated the unyielding temper of the doctor.

Loveday would have lost heart but that she supposed her brother's disappointment about Rose must wear off, and then perhaps he would become brighter and more sanguine. His manner and mood were depressing, but she made a brave struggle not to be crushed by them. How to better their prospects occupied her mind night and day. It was clear to her that till the daily grind of poverty was relieved there was no chance of her brother's spirits improving.

A fat sorrow, says a Cornish proverb, is better to bear than a lean sorrow. She made great allowance for the morose mood of Dennis. He had to bear a very heavy disappointment on great leanness.

Next morning, without waiting for Rose to visit her, Loveday went up to Towan. Rose received her stiffly she thought; but Loveday was without suspicion, and she attributed the distance and the coldness of her reception to

nervousness on the part of Rose at being seen in her new condition as bride.

After a little general conversation, which dragged, Loveday went headlong at the purpose of her visit.

'My dear Rose,' she said, 'I have come to ask a great kindness of you, a kindness which is to remain strictly between me and thee. I need say nothing about our being straitened in circumstances. Dennis has but one solace in all his troubles—his piano. You have heard how beautifully he plays on it. That instrument when new cost a hundred and fifty guineas, and was my father's wedding present to my mother. It is not, of course, worth the sum then given for it; but it is a good piano, and worth a good deal of money. Dennis is in immediate difficulties, and proposes selling it to Mr. Loveys, who will give five-and-twenty pounds for it. If the piano leaves our house, I do not know what will happen to Dennis: he will become so depressed that nothing will rouse him again. You do not know how bitter life can be made by the lack of a few shillings: how it galls the pride and frets the temper, how it darkens the eyes, and lies like a fester-

ing thorn in the sick soul. I have come up here to entreat you to do Dennis and me a great kindness. Will you buy our piano and leave it with us till you want it, or till we can redeem it? I do not like to ask you to advance us the money. I am, like Dennis, too proud to do that; but'—she laughed through the tears that were in her eyes—'I delude my haughty spirit by a trick: I say—buy the piano. We will consider it as yours, take care of it for you, and—yet—I am sure you will allow us to repurchase it of you if we are ever able to afford it.'

She fixed her earnest eyes on those of Rose. Rose had been offended by the desire of Gerans to see Loveday directly he arrived at home, and could not forgive his sending down after her, and had felt angry with Loveday and determined to keep her at a distance. But Rose was kind-hearted, and was at once touched by the story told her—touched especially, as Loveday pleaded not for herself, but for Dennis. Rose pitied the young doctor. Penhalligan had loved her very dearly, with an intensity of passion of which Gerans was incapable; and her marriage had been to him

a bitter disappointment. Rose was relieved directly she heard Loveday's request, because an opportunity was offered her of showing the rejected suitor a little favour and doing him a great kindness.

Loveday went on. 'Dear Rose, I see by your face that you pity him—poor fellow. You will do what I ask, will you not? Now for something further. I have no doubt that you will want needlework executed for you. Mrs. Gaverock is ill, and can do little. You have told me repeatedly that you are unskilful with the needle. Allow me to do all the making and mending that is required for the house, and let me earn a small sum, which can be struck off quarterly from the piano debt. May this be so?'

Rose, in effusive pity and good nature, caught her round the neck and kissed her.

'My dear Loveday,' she said, 'I have not the sum with me just now in my purse, but you shall have it. I will give it you and your brother—that, and more.'

'No,' said Loveday, 'we will not receive any money as a present. You shall buy the piano, and suffer me to repurchase it. If you

are to do us a kindness, it must be done on my terms.'

'Gerans shall get me the money at once out of my father-in-law.'

'You will not tell anyone what it is for: that is to remain a secret between us. Only Dennis must know; and, believe me, he will value the piano all the more when he knows it is yours.'

'Will he?' exclaimed Rose. 'I am so glad to hear that.'

Squire Gaverock and Gerans were out, so that Rose was unable to speak to them whilst Loveday was with her.

'I suppose your brother will be coming up in the evening,' she said. 'I will send the money by him.'

Then Loveday left.

Gerans and his father did not return till late in the afternoon. They had been out together in the boat. When Gerans went to his room to change his coat, Rose followed him.

'I want five-and-twenty pounds,' she said.

'Do you?' asked Gerans. 'Your wishes are moderate. I want a thousand, but I do not know where to find them.'

'I want the money at once,' said Rose. 'I have immediate need of it.'

'For what purpose?' asked he. 'There are no shops here. You have spent quite enough at Truro.'

'Never mind the object. I want and will have the money.'

'My dear Rose, you are welcome to it, as far as I am concerned.'

'The money is mine,' said Rose.

'My father manages for you. He is your trustee. The guardianship of your dear self he has transferred to me, but not the trusteeship of your fortune.' He put his arm round her, to draw her to him and kiss her, but she was annoyed, and with a twist escaped his arm.

'It seems to me vastly strange,' said Rose, 'that I should have three or four hundred a year, and yet not be able to touch twenty-five pounds when I want them.'

'Tell me what for, and I will ask my father to let you have the sum?'

'I will not tell you. The reason is good enough: I want it.'

'But that is not a reason wherewith to convince my father.'

'I will give no other.'

'Then you stand little chance of obtaining the money.'

'Do you mean to tell me that you refuse to ask him for it?'

'No, Rose, dear. I will ask, but he is not likely to consent.'

'*Make* him give it me.'

'I make my father!' Gerans fairly laughed at the idea. 'I thought that by this time you knew how resolute a man he is.'

'I will not be satisfied with twenty-five pounds now,' said Rose. 'I will have forty. Go and ask him for forty.'

'Be reasonable, my sweet blossom,' said Gerans. 'Anything that you desire in reason you shall have, but a sufficient reason must be shown. My father is responsible for your money, and he will not let you have it to throw away.'

'I am not going to throw it away.'

'What are you about to do with it?'

'I will not tell.'

'I have nothing of my own,' said Gerans good-humouredly, 'or I would gladly let you have what you want, and ask no questions; but

with my father it is otherwise. He must know the why and wherefore of every penny spent.'

'Come with me,' said Rose. 'I will have it out with the Squire.'

She was very angry, and went down into the hall with her cheeks flaming and her pretty lips pursed. Gaverock was there. He had thrown himself into his chair without changing his clothes or washing his hands, which were stained with gunpowder. His hair was very rough, heaped in a thick tangle on his head. He was cleaning his gun, and the air in the hall was impregnated with the offensive odour. He threw the oiled, blackened rag into the fire.

'There are others than the maidens want keeping in order,' said Rose, looking at the gun, sniffing, and tossing her head.

'The maidens!' repeated old Gaverock. 'They do indeed require looking to. Will you believe it?—I had no butter with my bread for two or three days. I was told the cows had yielded badly. Then the maids were all laid up with a bilious attack, and had to take blue pill and be visited by the doctor. I found they had been guzzling at the clotted cream. That is why I had no butter. If my wife can't, or

won't, look after them, you must do so, Mistress Rose. You are not here only as a beauty, but for business.'

'I am here now on business,' said she. 'I want money—forty pounds.'

'Forty porpoises!' laughed Gaverock. 'Whence are you going to get them?'

'From you. I must have money. It is mine, and I will have it. My father did not leave you my trustee to bully me, and deprive me of my money.'

'Halloo, Mistress Briar Rose! Showing your thorns?' He looked at her with astonishment. 'This is the second time. Yesterday; then again to-day.'

'I want only fair treatment,' said Rose. 'I want money. I will consent to take five-and-twenty pounds, but not one farthing less.'

'If you have any bills, bring them to me,' Gaverock said. 'But you shall not have the money without telling me the purpose for which it is destined.'

'That I will not tell you,' said Rose, stubbornly.

'Very well!'

Gaverock put his hands into his pockets,

threw his head back in the chair, and stretched out his legs their full length. The action was defiant, contemptuous; and Rose's blood flamed.

'You shall find me the money,' she said, 'or I will go to a lawyer, and get him to insist on your giving me up my own.'

Gaverock turned his head, and looked at her; then laughed.

'Gerans, there is a mutinous spirit here that must be quelled, or your cruise will end in wreck.'

'I think, father, you might as well let her have something. You have just asked her to take the management of the house out of my mother's hands, and, as you know well, there must be money given her for housekeeping.'

'The money is not for housekeeping,' said Rose, whose bosom was heaving with the breath that panted, and whose heart was beating fast.

'Let me know her object, and, if I think it right, she shall have the money,' said the old man composedly. 'But, Gerans—

> A whistling woman and a crowing hen
> Are good for neither God nor men.

This is not even a crowing barndoor fowl, but a strutting, blustering jenny-wren.'

Then there came a knock at the porch door.

'There is Penhalligan. I know his step and rap. Gerans, run and open to him,' said the Squire.

'Gerans shall not open the door!' exclaimed Rose, angrily. 'As you can't manage your maidens, you order your son about. It is a servant's place to answer the door, not that of a gentleman.'

'Nonsense, Rose,' said Gerans. 'How can you be so foolish? Penhalligan is a friend. One friend always flies to open to another.' Then he moved towards the door.

Rose rushed out of the room, ran upstairs, and locked herself into her own apartment, where she gave vent to her anger and disappointment in tears.

Presently Gerans came up and knocked at the door; she would not even answer, much less open to him, and he descended again.

She did not appear at supper, and again Gerans came to her door.

'I want nothing,' she said, in answer to his questions.

He hesitated a little while on the landing, and then said peremptorily—

'Open the door!'

'No,' she answered; 'I am not coming down.'

'Open the door, Rose.'

'I will not.'

'Then I will burst it open.'

She was alarmed, and obeyed. She stood, frightened, in the doorway; her hair dishevelled, and her eyes red.

'Rose,' he said in a gentle tone, 'you have been very foolish. You shall have the five-and-twenty pounds. My father has consented.'

'Who has got that out of him?' asked she eagerly. 'You?'

'Not I,' answered Gerans. 'That matters nothing. There, Rose, wash your face and come down.'

'Who persuaded your father?'

'Penhalligan reasoned with him. My father is quite open to reason, but he will not be defied and brow-beaten.'

'Penhalligan did it!'

'Yes. My father will furnish you with a

regular allowance, paid quarterly, for you to dispose of as you see best.'

'This is Mr. Penhalligan's proposal?'

'Yes, and a very sensible one.'

She stamped her foot angrily on the floor, and took a turn round the room, with teeth set and flashing eyes.

'Gerans,' she said, with heaving bosom, 'I do not know whether I most despise you or——'

'Or what?'

She turned sullenly away without answering.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK.

Dennis Penhalligan was walking through the coombe next morning. The spring or early summer sun was streaming through the young leaves of the wood. Flies danced in the golden light. The dingle was fragrant with spring flowers. The bluebells were not over; the red-robin was in bloom. The fern was raising its red, furred shepherds' crooks out of the ground, ready to uncoil as the heat grew more generous; the speedwell threw up its blue spires.

The wood-doves cooed softly; a squirrel leaped among the interlaced boughs—his was an easy run overhead, for here the boughs were netted like coarse lace; as they were debarred from rising high, they spread laterally and formed a densely woven screen of branches, twigs, and foliage. A magpie screamed and

rushed away. Dennis looked after it and laughed mockingly. 'One for sorrow; only one,' he said. His thoughts were weaving a plaiting like the branches above him; he was thinking of Rose. It seemed to him that he could understand her heart. She had never loved Gerans; she had been persuaded into taking him partly, perhaps, because she was comfortable at Towan, and did not know where else to go; partly induced by his good looks and easy good nature. She had not known in time that she was loved by him, Dennis, or she would have hesitated, perhaps have refused Gerans. Dennis was rejected only because he asked too late. He clung to this thought. He built out of it a hope that he was kindly regarded by Rose; that she harboured a secret liking for him in her heart—a liking which, under more favourable circumstances, might have unfolded into love. Now that she was married she had found out that she did not love Gerans. There was a void in her heart which could not be filled by such as he. Dennis had watched her face on her return from the bridal tour; he had been present at the quarrel on the arrival. He had seen her turn an

angry, disappointed countenance on her husband. There had been no trace of affection in her expression when she spoke to him. Only yesterday there had been an altercation. He had arrived in the middle of it; he had seen Rose dash out of the room with a face on fire with indignation and wrath. Gerans had, of course, occasioned it. Dennis heard that Rose had wanted money, and he himself had advised the old Squire to let her have pin money, and not create a lasting quarrel by unreasonable refusal. The Squire had yielded to his advice.

The marriage was like to be a miserable one. Dennis did not regret this. He felt bitterly that Gerans had spoiled his own happiness, and blighted that of Rose, who certainly would have been happy in his love.

Whilst he was thus thinking he came out into a glade. Here the sun lay on a bed of turf, completely buried under old brown autumn leaves. The wind had eddied here as it swept down over the trees, and had heaped the dead leaves above the grass. They lay dense as a russet carpet, stifling the grass below by forbidding light and air to reach it.

Dennis Penhalligan stood still and looked at the carpet of dead leaves. The effect was singular. In the wood the soil was teeming with life; here was one broad tract of death. The rains had wet and glued the leaves together; those beneath were, perhaps, half-rotten, but the upper surface was uninjured. The leaves were distinct as plates of mail, and covered the earth like a panoply, protecting it from every arrow of sunlight.

When Dennis put his foot on the bed of leaves it bent, but did not break, and the soil beneath seemed spongy. He looked round and saw exactly how the phenomenon had been brought about. The glade was completely enclosed by dwarf trees; when the wind drove the leaves into it there they whirled, but thence they could not escape. There was no door of escape open for them. When the wind rushed up the valley from the sea and stripped the withered foliage from the boughs and carried it in a fluttering cloud before it, it swept them all into this open space and left them to spin and dance and turn over and over there, and finally fall on one another, till they were cemented together where they lay by common

decay. With the leaves were split-open beech-mast cases, with prickly outsides, all empty, and many masts, but the masts were lifeless. Dennis stooped and pressed several between his fingers; they were fleshless husks, refused even by the wood-pigeons.

'Such a backwater as this I find myself in here,' he said, 'a place of withered hopes and dead promise, of empty aspirations and disappointed ambitions. I cannot escape from it. Here I must spin about and rot away, without a prospect of emancipation.' He bowed and picked up a rose-hip, no longer bright scarlet and hard, but pulpy, black, decayed. 'Nor I alone,' he said with a sigh: 'the rose also must wither here, lose its beauty, and become filth on the face of the earth—it will be so also with the other Rose.'

He walked on; the little footpath was embedded in leaves, somewhat crushed and half-converted into mire. All at once Dennis stopped, looked, and knelt down. Before him was a little spot of green; some two or three living leaves had driven their way through the casing of dead leaves. Dennis put his hand to

one of these and picked it. 'Is it possible? A four-leaved shamrock!'

At the same moment the bushes parted before him, and Rose appeared, framed in young spring green foliage and bursting honeysuckle, the sun on her golden hair and in her brilliant blue eyes, and illumining her delicately-coloured face. She wore a white straw hat, trimmed with pink, shaded satin ribbon in large bows, and lined with silk of the same hue; a white kerchief was round her bosom; she was dressed in a soft silvery-grey gown, short, showing her pretty little feet in white stockings and low black shoes. In her hand she held a packet of white paper with a scarlet seal, very large, on it.

Dennis remained kneeling at her feet, looking up at her as in a trance, hardly able to believe that he saw the true Rose, and not a spirit of the wood appearing in her form to deceive and torment him.

'What is it that you have found, Mr. Penhalligan?' asked Rose, smiling.

He remained still on one knee, speechless.

'Have I caught you in the commission of a crime?' asked Rose, drawing nearer. Then

she also stooped. 'A four-leaved clover,' she said with delight. 'That is lucky. You—you who are for ever bewailing your misfortunes, you have got the good luck to-day in your hands. You are right not to speak. A word will break the spell. You must form a wish, and that wish is sure to be granted.'

He rose now to his feet, holding the shamrock-leaf in his hand, and looking from it to Rose.

'Come,' said she, 'form your wish; it is yours.'

He looked intently at her, and her eyes fell before his burning glance. Then he shook his head and handed her the leaf. 'I have nothing to wish for,' he said.

'Oh, happy man, who has everything he desires!'

'Not so, Mistress Rose; one who has lost the only thing he could wish for, one who is deprived of that has not another wish left.'

Rose coloured. She understood his meaning and was confused. She rapidly recovered herself and said, 'You are too soon dispirited, Mr. Penhalligan. You think, at the first discomfiture, that all is lost. I am sure you were

wishing very much for something. I can read your heart. I know what passes therein.'

He started, and his colour deepened.

'I do,' she continued. 'You thought you had lost your piano, and were wishing to be able to keep it. See, your wish is granted. It is yours to keep till—till you need it no more.'

He raised his brows. 'I do not understand. Has Loveday been blabbing?'

'Loveday has sold me her piano, the pretty instrument that was her mother's, and to which you had no right whatever. Loveday has fled to me to save her from her brother. She has sold it to me for twenty-five pounds. Here is the money. You can hand it to her from me. I ask you a favour, Mr. Penhalligan. Will you keep my piano in your house, as there is no room for it at Towan, and practise on it as much as you can to preserve it in tune till I want it, which will not be till I leave Towan and set up my tent-poles in Truro?'

'How kind of you—how very kind!' said the Doctor, greatly moved and colouring deeply.

'Not at all. Selfish, most selfish,' answered Rose. 'But you see I was right. I read your wish, and brought fulfilment at the same time.'

'To be thought of kindly by you, Mistress Rose, was more than I dared desire.'

'Take this,' she said, and pressed the little packet into his hands. 'Give it to Loveday from me, and take no toll on your way.'

He caught her hand and bowed his lips to the finger-tips. The blood rushed into her brow.

'That will do, Mr. Penhalligan. You owe me no gratitude. I am consulting my own convenience. When I move to Truro I shall carry off my piano.'

'May that never be!'

'O selfish man, you want to keep my piano!'

'I do not wish to lose sight of my benefactress.'

'I am not a benefactress, I repeat. You mistake.'

'I make no mistake. May I offer you now this four-leaved shamrock? As you say, it has fulfilled my wish, perhaps it may fulfil yours.'

'It is too late—I have spoken.'

'It is not too late; you have not had the shamrock in your hand yet.'

'Is that so? Very well, I will accept the leaf.'

He gave it her, and she stood in the sweet sunlight on the mat of dead leaves, the doves cooing in the wood, a pair of white butterflies flickering about her—a lovely object, lovely and sweet as a wild rose in June. She frowned whilst she considered what her wish should be, though a pretty dimple played about her mouth. She was half-amused, half-ashamed of herself. By degrees the expression of her face changed. The brightness and merriment went out of it, and a shadow of vexation and a gloom of discontent crossed it. Dennis watched her face intently. The light of the sun was full on her, so that she could not lift her eyes to see him, but he could watch every change in her countenance.

'I have wished,' she said moodily, 'but I have no hope that my desire will be answered.'

'I believe I have read your wish,' he said.

She started, looked up, but in the dazzling light her eyes fell again; in her clear face the tell-tale blood flickered. She had been wishing that Gerans would be a little more resolute with his father.

In another moment her mood changed. The cloud was dispersed, laughter and dimples

returned, and with a short twinkling glance at Dennis, she said—

'Well, Mr. Penhalligan, I hope you have learnt a lesson to-day—Never despair.' Then she went backwards among the bushes, putting forth her hands and drawing them apart, and in a moment was lost to sight. Dennis stood rooted to the spot, looking after her. He had quite misinterpreted the thoughts of her heart when her face clouded. Only in this was he right, that she had turned her mind to Gerans, and that her wish was connected with him.

When she had formed her wish she threw down the leaf; it lay at his feet resting on the dead leaves. He picked it up and put it to his lips. Then he opened his pocket-book and pressed the leaf therein.

He walked home with a tumult in his heart. When he came near his house he turned; he would not go in and be seen of his sister. He did not choose, he could not endure that her eye should mark the agitation of his mind. He felt that before her honest eye his own would turn away.

The last words of Rose rang in his ear—'Never despair.' What was the one thing he

cared for? The one object of his heart's desire? He had told her plainly enough that he cared for, wished for her, and that he had no desire for anything beside. Having lost her he had lost everything. Knowing this, with strange significance she had bidden him hope on—not despair. Then the remembrance of Constantine came upon him. The sea had engulfed the one brother, why not also the other? Gerans was going that very day on the water with his father. Involuntarily Dennis looked up at the sky for a token of wind. Was this also in *her* mind, he asked himself, when she held the leaf and bade him hope on? Gerans, Gerans alone, stood in his way.

Then he laughed bitterly and harshly, as again his tread disturbed the magpie.

'One for sorrow—only one,' he said. 'A life-long sorrow, with only one solace in it—she hates and despises him as heartily as I hate and despise him.'

He looked at the packet he held; it was addressed to his sister in Rose's hand, and sealed with the crest of the Gaverocks, a goat on a mount, trippant, a canting crest on the name, which in old Cornish means 'The Goat-Hill.'

He entered Nantsillan Cottage, placed the

letter on the piano, seated himself, and began to play. Then his sister came in. He was glad to be at the instrument that she might not see his face. He signed to her to take the packet.

'Dennis, dear,' she said, 'I know its contents. Twenty-five pounds. It will tide us over our present trouble.'

'And sweep us on into one that is worse,' he said.

'Why will you look for darkness instead of day? Be hopeful.'

He smiled. Twice he had been bidden not to be discouraged.

Loveday returned to her work, but presently looked into the room again.

'What are you playing, Dennis?'

'I am playing out of my own head and heart,' he answered.

'I do not like it; change the piece,' she said; 'it is wild, threatening, and uncomfortable. It has made me uneasy. Throw in some brighter chords; bring in a thread of sweet melody.'

'I cannot; the music leads me on; I follow, blindly. It is with music that is improvised as with destiny; we make neither, they make themselves.'

CHAPTER XXV.

A LOVEYS' VISITATION.

Now that Gerans was at home, old Gaverock dragged him from it. He made him ride with him to market and cruise with him about the coast. The Squire had for some time wanted to visit St. Ives, to have the 'Mermaid' refitted with sails and cordage, St. Ives being a great place for such manufacture. Accordingly, Gerans had not been home a week before the old man had told him to be ready to go with him to St. Ives. Gerans raised no objection.

'I suppose the neighbours will be coming to call on us,' said Rose, pouting. 'I presume I am to be left alone to receive them.'

'Show them every hospitality,' answered Squire Gaverock. 'Stuff them with cake, make them drink your health in old port. I give you the keys. Don't let the maidens get it. Lord bless you! whilst you were away the nobbies

(buns) came in without figs (raisins). I ate four nobbies and got but one fig. Yet the proper amount was served out, only the maidens ate the figs instead of putting them into the nobbies. Then—will you believe it?—I sent a maid to draw me a jug of cider for my supper, and she forgot to turn the tap, so by next morning a whole hogshead had run to waste.'

'I cannot go after the servants and see that they do their work properly,' said Rose, tossing her head.

'Very well,' answered Gaverock, grimly; 'then I will tell you what to expect. You will have all the crusts and stale ends of loaves served for you to eat, whilst the maidens are gorging on fresh bread. That was my experience. Never spent such a miserable time as since my old woman has been laid up. Damn hysterics! Gerans, come on. In that villainous month with the maidens I got more grey hairs than in three years previous. I do not know what would have been the end had not Loveday Penhalligan come to the rescue, and brought some order into the store closet and discipline into the kitchen. All the lemons went mouldy whilst I had the key, and the mice made a nest

in the bag of vermicelli. I found the gardener's boys playing marbles in the backyard with the nutmegs. How they got them is a mystery. I suppose the maidens——'

'Perhaps,' said Rose, throwing up her chin, 'it would conduce to your happiness, uncle, if Loveday were to take up her residence in the house altogether, and manage the maidens, the store-room, Gerans, and me.'

'I'll tell y' what, mistress,' said the old man, 'we shall be brought to that if you don't take heartily to doing your duty. Someone must be housekeeper here. I won't; one month was enough for me. I'd rather manage a caravan of monkeys than a kitchenful of maidens. If you won't do your duty, someone must be summoned to do it for you.'

'Father,' said Gerans, 'Rose will always do her duty.'

'Do not speak off your book,' said Rose, sharply, turning on her husband. 'You cannot answer that I will do my duty; but you may promise that I will always follow my pleasure.'

'The colt must be broken into harness by you or by me, Gerans,' said the Squire on his way down to the boat. 'At the touch of the

whip up go her heels: none the worse for that in the end. But it will be a tough job just at first to break her. Whatever you do, Gerans, don't give her her head. She wants a firm hand on the reins; must be ridden with the curb; and when she sets back her ears, dig into her flanks with your spurs, and cut her this way, that way, till your arm aches. Trust me; I know women.' The old Squire illustrated his instruction with hand and heel. 'After a while,' he went on, 'it is beautiful to see how they obey. You have only to draw your whip tenderly across their necks, and they understand you as if you spoke volumes. I am sixty-five; I have made my experiences; I know them.'

In the meantime, the poor woman on whom his experience had been made with curb, and bearing rein, and spur, and whip, was a broken-spirited, failing creature, unable to attend to the requirements of her house; who came down into the drawing-room every day, was visited by her husband, who tried to rout her into activity, who scolded, and hectored, and rebuked her for yielding to imaginary maladies, and piling all domestic vexations upon his back.

Gerans was dutiful and kind to his mother;

but he could not be much with her, and his subjects of interest were not hers. Besides, for a month he had been away; and during that month, but for Loveday, she would have been neglected. Loveday had made a point of visiting the old lady every day. A tender love had sprung up between them, and Mrs. Gaverock was unhappy and restless on the day that she did not see the girl. Loveday had a soothing influence upon her mind, fretted with her husband's impatience, with the consciousness that household affairs were on the cross, that she had duties to discharge which she was incapable of discharging. Gaverock rushed into her room when anything went wrong. She suffered for the butter and the crusts, and the cider cask run out, and the jug of lamp oil, and the raisinless buns, and the mice in the vermicelli, and the boys with the nutmegs, and the mildewed lemons, and the hunting breeches converted into a knife-board, and the wet nightcap. She worried about these things till they made her nervous and ill; her brain could not bear the daily annoyances; and when the Squire plunged into the room, and flung the store-room keys down on the table with an oath, and swore he would

have no more to do with stores and servants, then Loveday took up the bunch, and distributed what was needed every day till the return of Rose.

It is a peculiarity of the female mind that it draws delight from the possession of a secret which it can share with one or two close friends. Mrs. Gaverock and Loveday had a secret—the secret of the marriage of the latter—and this secret formed the closest of bonds between them. Should this ever cease to be a secret, one great charm and sweetness of their intercourse would be gone. Both felt this, and shrank from the thought of Constantine's marriage becoming generally known.

After the return of Rose and Gerans, Loveday did not come to Towan every day to visit the old lady. She thought it was the place of Rose to become the consoler and stay of her mother-in-law. But Rose, though kind, was not considerate; and she did not understand and sympathise with the old lady so as to enable her to fill the position which was hers by right.

Squire Gaverock and Gerans would be absent for some days. For how many, depended

on the wind and the activity of the refitters at St. Ives. Rose was not pleased at her husband being carried off immediately on his return home. The old man had not shown her proper consideration in throwing on her the sole responsibility of receiving visitors.

The same day that Squire Gaverock left, the Loveys' party came to call: old Anthony, young Anthony, and the Madam. Although we have put Madam Loveys last, she was the most important person of the three. Anthony Loveys, senior, was an old, heavy, red-faced man; and Anthony Loveys, junior, was a young, heavy, red-faced man. Neither had anything to say for himself, except on the subject of dogs and horses. To these two subjects the elder added rates. When Anthony, junior, reached the independent position and age of his father, he also, doubtless, would supplement dogs and horses with rates as topics on which he could talk. Mrs. Loveys was a woman with bright, keen eyes, and a Roman nose. She was accustomed to command in the house and outside, and met with equal obedience from her servants, her son, and her husband. She had inherited the domineering

spirit of the Gaverocks; and, as her husband had yielded to it, she became the one person of authority in the house and in her parish. Even the clerk in church, when he gave out the psalm, announced, 'Let Madam and I sing to the praise and glory,' &c. He thus gave it out because he and she were the only persons in the church who sang. The peasants could not read; and the two Anthonies either had no voices or were too lazy to use them. Madam Loveys sang loudly and sang well. The congregation stood up to listen to Madam sing, and sat down to listen to the parson pray. Occasionally, during the service, Madam Loveys would rise from her knees, stand up, and look round. If she saw that any of the labourers or their wives were asleep, or inattentive, she coughed. If this did not rouse them to devotion, she coughed a second time. She rarely was obliged to cough a third time, so greatly in awe of her did the people stand. The Loveys' party were shown into the parlour. Madam Loveys sailed in first—tall, portly, head erect, eagle eyes looking into every corner—followed by old Anthony, and old Anthony by young Anthony, scuffling in.

'How do you do, Lydia?' to Mrs. Gaverock on the sofa. 'Better, of course; don't deny it. I won't believe you. And Rose, my dear, glad to see you. Come to call and welcome you as one of us. Now Anthony, give your aunt your right, not your left hand. How have you enjoyed your trip? Greatly, of course. You have got a fine fellow for a husband—quite a Gaverock in build, but wanting the Gaverock force of character. Anthony, don't shake your cousin's hand as if you were working a pump. Raise the finger-tips gallantly to your lips. You don't mean to tell me, Lydia, that Gaverock is gone to St. Ives, and has taken Gerans with him? Tell him when you see him that I say his conduct is preposterous —that *I* say it. He will mind me. You may sit down, Anthony.' She gave no instruction to her husband. She had given him up in despair, but her son, though aged one-and-twenty, was as yet unformed, and she did her best to model him.

'I am sorry Gaverock is not here,' said Mr. Loveys. 'I wanted to consult him. They've stuck on twopence in the pound in our parish. I don't understand it.'

'That is all right,' said Madam, 'don't you bother yourself about it. You never did understand anything in which division and subtraction were necessary.'

'But, my dear, twopence in the pound is not subtraction, it is addition.'

'If you are in doubt, send the overseers up to me with the rate-book. I'll go through the account. Anthony, you may go and look at the stables—only mind your boots. We are going to stay for tea.'

'Of course you are,' said Mrs. Gaverock, kindly, but looking somewhat blank; for Mrs. Loveys overpowered her, and she was incapable of the strain of entertaining the two Anthonies.

'We are going to spend the evening,' said Madam; 'as Hender and Gerans are gone, you are likely to be dull, so I have brought my husband and son to enliven you.'

Mrs. Gaverock looked with an appealing glance at Rose. Rose smiled. 'I am very glad, Aunt Honora,' she said, 'Loveday Penhalligan is coming; I will send down a boy for the doctor, and we will do our best to be merry. We will have music and cards.'

'I think,' said Mr. Loveys, 'that I also would like to look into the stables.'

'Go,' said his wife, 'examine the horses, and feel the pigs. We can do without you till tea time. I want a chat with Lydia and Rose, and you are in the way.'

'Thank you, my dear. I'll be sure to be here for the meal.'

Then Mr. Loveys slipped away.

Rose, nettled at the conduct of her father-in-law, was resolved to show him that she could do very well without his presence, that his absence was a relief to her. She was determined that she would do her best to give the Loveys a pleasant evening, knowing that Madam would tell her brother how vastly they had enjoyed themselves during his absence. But this was not her only motive. The Loveys' party were, when alone, very trying to Mrs. Gaverock, and it was her duty to the poor lady to relieve her of the trouble of entertaining them.

At the time of which we write, and the custom prevailed to some twenty-five years ago in the West of England, it was a common thing for friends to visit, sometimes uninvited, and to take a 'high tea'—that is, tea and meat

and cakes and puddings and wine, and spend the evening till the moon shone on their ride or drive home. Few dined late. Nothing more hospitable, pleasant, and sociable could have been devised than these visits. In a thinly-peopled region distances are great, and a visit entails a journey of some hours. Moreover, a visit in a thinly-peopled country is hailed by those on whom the descent is made as a pleasure for which to be grateful. Also, a visit entailing several hours' drive over breezy downs makes the visitors hungry; therefore those visited, being grateful, exhibit their gratitude by feeding their visitors.

The Loveys family did not live at a great distance—in fact, they lived only in the next parish; nevertheless, a visit with them, whether near or far, always meant a visitation of several hours, and a meal, to which the two Anthonies and Madam always did justice. Madam was hospitable in return. To call and not stay some hours and eat at her table was to offend her. This was the custom of the country and of the time, and we, who in our younger days were familiar with it, sigh over the old, homely, hospitable fashions that have passed away.

Loveday arrived shortly after, and Dennis came up in answer to a summons, bringing his music with him. Loveday at once saw what was to be done, to amuse the Loveys family to the relief of Mrs. Gaverock, and she devoted herself to doing this. It was hard to get anything but Yes and No out of young Anthony, but she did manage to galvanise him into a little life, assisted by his mother, who administered shocks at intervals by saying, 'Now then, Anthony, did you hear what Miss Penhalligan was asking? Of course you know where the wild yellow marigold grows, and will be happy to bring her some roots—say so.' Or, 'Come, Anthony, no doubt you are right, that what Miss Penhalligan has seen in the glen is a badger; but go on, and promise to hunt there with the dogs and catch it, and cure the skin for her. You can do that, you know, with alum and pepper.' Or, 'Well, Anthony! Say something more than Lawk! when you have trodden the gathers out of Miss Penhalligan's gown.'

During tea, Mrs. Gaverock was left to herself in the drawing-room. Loveday took her a cup, and what she fancied from the table;

but when the meal was over, the whole party returned to the parlour for a round game, and for music.

'Do you think, Mr. Penhalligan, that you could read us something?' asked Rose. 'Something not dreary and terrible; as a variety to cards and music. Not the "Essay on Man" and the "Dissertation on Happiness."

> O Happiness! our being's end and aim!
> Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name:
> That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
> For which we bear to live, or dare to die,
> Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
> O'erlooked, seen double, by the fool, and wise.'

'Let me hear the "Rape of the Lock,"' asked Mrs. Gaverock, gently; 'it is many years since I have either read it or heard it read.'

'Mistress Rose has Pope on the tip of her tongue,' said Dennis, 'surely she can recite us some of his verses.'

'No, Mr. Penhalligan, my memory is only stocked with scraps, like a rag-bag.'

'"The Rape of the Lock," by all means,' said Madam Loveys. 'Anthony knows nothing about it. His mind needs culture. Anthony, sit by me, and I can then ensure your keeping awake. I will nudge you, or touch you with

my fan when we reach verses of conspicuous beauty. Mr. Penhalligan, you will confer a lasting obligation on us if you will read.'

'It would be unmannerly to make a condition,' said Dennis, 'but it is permissible to offer a petition. I venture to ask that between the cantos Mrs. Rose will favour us with her harp and a song.'

The evening passed briskly. Rose was in her element. At her father's house entertainments had been frequent; she was not shy; she was delighted to have distraction, relief from the monotony of life at Towan.

'I can see by aunt's face that she has enjoyed herself,' said Rose. 'We have not had too much of one thing, though Mr. Penhalligan's reading, and Loveday's singing, and Mr. Loveys' whist, and Madam's comments, and Mr. Anthony's attention, have all been admirable of their kind. I invite you here again on Saturday, and I will get some of the Brendons to come as well from the Rectory. But stay —I have a suggestion.' She threw a number of little books on the table. 'Why should we not, next time, diversify our amusements still further? At our house in Kenwyn, when papa

was alive, we used to make up parties to read plays, each taking a part. Shall we begin on Monday? Take each a copy and all look over your parts. What do you say, Aunt Loveys? And you, Mr. Penhalligan? Let us begin "She Stoops to Conquer."'

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE DUSK.

GERANS and his father returned to Towan on Saturday evening. The 'Mermaid' was run into the little port at Sandymouth, and secured, then both ascended the cliff, for home.

'What have we here?' asked the Squire, 'hats and sticks! That is the hat of Loveys—I know it, and there is Madam's umbrella. Her clogs also.'

'Dennis is also here,' said Gerans, 'I know his overcoat.'

'And that green umbrella belongs to the Misses Brendon,' said Hender Gaverock. 'There seems to be a party here.' He opened the door into the hall, and saw that the table was laid with glass, silver, preserves, pies, cold chicken, and adorned with flowers.

Old Gaverock laughed. 'Whilst the cat is away the mice are romping. I must take off

my sea-togs and make myself presentable. You do the same, Gerans.'

'Where is Mrs. Rose Gaverock?' asked the young man of a servant. He was told that she was in her own room. Mrs. Gaverock was in the parlour with the company.

Gerans was disappointed. In his kindly, tender heart the words Rose had said to him before he left rankled. He tried to forget and bury them out of thought, but they worked up, like stones in a ploughed field. He was inclined to judge her charitably. She was accustomed to have her own way, and was impatient of opposition. When opposed, she fired up and said words which, doubtless, she afterwards repented having uttered, and which at the time they were spoken were exaggerations of her momentary feeling.

She had told him that she despised him, she had scoffed at his obedience to his father; but his conscience was clear; he had given way to his father because his father was in the right; surely Rose would have despised him if he had supported her in demanding and doing what was wrong. She did not mean what she said. Her words were the spluttering of sparks from

a burning log of fir. The sparks scorched and marked where they fell, but were too small and powerless to ignite anything. Besides, Gerans had been accustomed to rough words from his father, all his life, which had gone with a good deal of affection. Nevertheless, the experience of stinging speeches from a woman's lips was new to Gerans, and was painful, partly because he believed them to be undeserved, chiefly because the speaker was very dear to him.

He had looked forward to his return, that he might be alone with Rose, and be completely reconciled. She would beg his pardon for what she had said, and he would caution her not to test her powers against those of the old Squire. He heard the buzz of voices in the parlour; he was glad she was in her own room; he could see her alone first, before she met the visitors. Their presence was not pleasant to him. He was not very well, and would have to remain in his own room; he must either withdraw her from the party downstairs, or remain the evening by himself.

'Why should she not keep me company?' he said. 'I would gladly do so, if she were ill. She will be pleased to be with me. A woman

is happy to sacrifice something for the man she loves. She is not wanted in the parlour, for my mother is there, my father is going in, and my aunt is hostess in our house.'

He opened his dressing-room door and went in, and would have passed through into the bedroom beyond, but he heard Loveday's voice, within, speaking to Rose. The door of communication was ajar. There was another door into the bedroom from the corridor outside.

'You are longing for their return, I suppose.'

'Oh dear, no!' answered Rose, 'not at all. I fairly skipped when their backs were turned. Loveday, there is nothing like marriage for making a girl sick of mankind.'

Then ensued a pause. Presently Loveday spoke again: 'When do you suppose they will be home?'

'Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps the day after. If I had my wishes, not for another week. I am not sure, though, that I should not like them to come home to-night, and see how well we can entertain ourselves in their absence. Now run down, dear; I will follow directly.'

Loveday left the room by the door into the

passage. Then Gerans came in. There was a carpet on the floor, and he had taken off his big waterboots in the back hall below stairs. Consequently, Rose did not hear his tread when he opened the door and entered. She was standing before a looking-glass, arranging a red geranium in her hair. She was prettily, coquettishly dressed in white, with short sleeves, and much of her lovely neck and throat showing. A coral chain was round her neck. There was a childlike beauty and simplicity about her appearance.

She heard the noise of his foot on her bedroom floor, and turned half round, with her arms raised, adjusting the scarlet flower, and the loose sleeves were fallen back, exhibiting her delicate, rounded, ivory arms. She supposed a servant-maid had entered, to tell her she was wanted below. But, as nothing was said, she turned round with an impatient movement.

'My dear Rose!' exclaimed Gerans.

She started. For a moment she looked at him, with parted lips, and expressionless, wide-opened eyes, without uttering a word. Then suddenly she became scarlet.

'What! already back? You startled me.

I thought you would not be here so soon. I hardly expected you to sail on Friday.'

As she spoke, she withdrew her right hand from her hair, and held it out to him, whilst with the other she continued fidgeting with the flower and the pin that held it.

'We thought to take you by surprise, to give you pleasure, my sweet white Rose! my dear spring morning, my dewy blossom!'

He held her hand with both his, and drew her towards him, till he could pass his arm round her, hold her to his heart, which was beating fast, and kiss her brow.

'There,' he said, 'I shall not be away for so long again, unless I can help it. Every day of absence has to me been one of longing for your presence.'

He spoke with a tone of reproach in his voice, not intentional. He spoke the truth, but as he spoke he recalled her words to Loveday, expressing a very different feeling.

'Let me have another look at the Pride of my Life,' he said, and held her at arm's length. Then he saw that he had not been wrong in calling her a dewy blossom, for tears stood in her eyes.

'Why are you crying?' he asked.

She bowed her head on her bosom, and gave no answer. Had she spoken she would have sobbed.

Gerans considered for a moment, and a line formed on his open brow, but it passed away. He thought that she was regretting her unkind words spoken before they parted, regretting the light words just said, in his hearing, to Loveday; and, in his good nature, he thought to spare her the humiliation of confessing the reason.

'Never mind,' he said. 'I startled you—did I not?'

'Yes,' she answered; 'I have not recovered myself yet.'

He went to the window, and looked out on the rainy, grey sky, to allow her, unobserved, to recover herself. He said, still gazing out through the panes of glass:

'We have had a wet miserable sail; but the expectation of soon seeing you has filled my heart with longing.'

She did not answer. After a while he turned round, and saw his young wife seated on a sofa, wiping her eyes.

'What!' he said. 'Not yet recovered?'

'Oh yes,' she answered. 'I was only thinking that——'

She bit her red, quivering lips, and her bosom rose with a sob.

'My dearest Rose,' he said. 'There—there! think no more about it.'

He took a chair, turned the back towards her, and seated himself on it astride, with his elbows on the back, looking at her. The window was behind him, and the evening light was on her pretty, troubled face. Gerans thought how lovely she was, what a prize was his, how surpassingly happy he ought to be.

'You have got company downstairs,' he said, to change the current of her thoughts, and divert it from self-reproach.

'Yes,' she replied, looking down at her lap; 'Uncle and Aunt Loveys are here, and young Mr. Brendon and his sister.'

'Loveday is also here, surely.'

'Yes; Loveday, of course, is here.'

'Is that all? Not Dennis?'

'Oh—Mr. Penhalligan also.'

She coloured slightly; her eyes were still on her lap. But Gerans was entirely free from jealousy. He did not observe the flush.

'Has anything happened whilst I have been away?'

'Nothing particular. There have been calls. The Loveys' party, and the Brendons, also Captain and Mrs. Trefry, and the parson from St. Golan—I forget his name.'

Gerans rocked himself in his chair, without turning his eyes from Rose.

'I have not been well. I caught a cold, I suppose, in my eyes, and I have suffered much. One day I could not bear the light. I had to remain shut in at the little tavern where we put up at St. Ives, whilst my father went about the new sails and tackle.'

He stopped. She did not seem to be listening. When he stopped she started.

'Yes?' she said quickly. 'Sails and tackle you were speaking about.'

'I was telling you that I had been very unwell. I got a chill and inflammation of my eyes.'

'I am very, very sorry.'

'You have not observed how red they still are. I cannot bear a strong light.'

'I could not see; the room was dark,' she explained, and stooped and looked—but shyly—into his eyes.

He turned his head that she might observe how red and hot they were.

'I see. I am sorry.'

'I cannot bear much light, especially candle and lamp light, so I will not go downstairs. I would prefer to sit here in the dusk, with you. You can let me have a place beside you on the settee, and we will talk together. We shall enjoy that so much more than being downstairs with the Loveys and Brendon parties.'

'Yes,' answered Rose, faintly not cordially.

'But I suppose you must show yourself. Look here, Rose; explain to them why I remain away, and make an excuse for yourself as well. Was it not Pluto, the God of Darkness, who had Proserpine for a wife, half whose time was to be spent with the merry gods in light, and the other half with her husband in darkness? Well, so let it be to-night. Go down to tea, and after that is over slip away, and come to keep me company.'

'But,' said she, with trembling lips, 'we are going to read a play; it is all settled, and I shall be wanted.'

'No, no,' answered Gerans, cheerfully. 'Miss Brendon can take your part, but I do not sup-

pose there will be reading where my father is present. He will endure nothing but cards.'

Then Gerans stood up, and went into his dressing-room.

'I have not been acting judiciously,' he said, 'sitting so long talking to you, in my wet clothes. However, I have not felt it; I have been in a glow, sitting over against you, my pretty.'

Then he shut his dressing-room door.

No sooner was Rose alone than her self-restraint gave way, and she began to cry. Why, she could not explain to herself. She was disappointed of a pleasant evening, and of amusing herself reading her part in 'She Stoops to Conquer.' She was happy among many people; she had dressed herself with special care to attract admiration, to force everyone present to say: How pretty she is! What a lucky fellow Gerans Gaverock is to have got so charming a bride! She wanted particularly to hear Mr. Penhalligan play, and to sing with him and Loveday 'Five times by the taper's light.' She had set her mind on playing her harp. Her beautiful arms, bare above the rosy elbow, would show to-night, and make even poor playing acceptable.

It was really too provoking of Gerans to come home that night—and with sore eyes also, which would prevent him from going down to the company. It was cruel, it was unreasonable of him to ask her to sit with him in the dark in the bedroom, whilst there were lights, and card-tables, and round games, and conversation, and laughter, and music below. She was obliged to wash her face, to put away the traces of her tears, before she could descend. She went downstairs at last, and assisted at tea; but her cheerfulness was gone—a shadow of disappointment hung over her brow. Her attention was distracted, and she took little or no part in the conversation. This mattered the less because the Squire was there, and where he was no one else could talk. He was boisterous, in good spirits, and full of what he had done and seen in St. Ives. Mr. Loveys interrupted him once to ask his opinion about the extra twopence in the pound added to the rate, but Hender Gaverock was too much interested in his own proceedings, and the conduct of the 'Mermaid,' newly rigged, to turn his thoughts to the rates, and consider whether the imposition was just or not.

After tea, Rose reluctantly apologised for leaving the guests, and promised to return as soon as she could be spared, then she went up to Gerans.

He kept her with him a long time, telling her what had been done, repeating in other words the uninteresting story of the expedition to St. Ives, already told during tea by his father. It seemed to her as if he never would have done —the time seemed interminable. Occasionally she heard the burst of laughter from downstairs, then the sound of the piano. Dennis Penhalligan was playing. She had heard the piece before, Beethoven's Sonata in C minor; he had played it on the evening when she and Gerans were at Nantsillan, before that eventful Goose Fair.

As her mind wandered, drawn away by the music, indistinctly heard, the voice of Gerans sounded in her ear as out of a remote distance, and she no longer heard what he was saying. Then she recovered her thoughts with an effort, to catch a word or two, and make some suitable observation, or ask a pertinent question, that Gerans might not notice her abstraction.

Presently, he pressed her hand so tightly in his, that she uttered an exclamation of pain.

'You hurt me.'

'I do not think you are attending to me. I want to give you a piece of advice.'

'I detest advice,' said Rose. 'I never read the morals to "Æsop's Fables."'

'It is for your advantage,' said Gerans, gravely. 'Promise me, my own darling, do not be cross with my father; do not oppose him, if he is a little dictatorial and crabbed. He thinks you ought to be more yielding, and I am sure he will thwart you on all sorts of points till you give way. It is best to humour him. You got on very well with him before we were married. Why do you change your behaviour now? Nothing is to be gained by it. Take my advice, dear Rose, and give way.'

'And so,' said she angrily, 'I am to be thwarted, and contradicted, and bullied, and brow-beaten, and you will stand by and allow it! You—my husband! allow it!'

'My dear Rose, be reasonable. He is my father. We are in his house. He is the best of men, but he has his humours. You can lead

him where you will, if you pretend deference to his will.'

'I will not pretend. I have my will, as well as he.'

'If you are in the right, I will support you; if you are in the wrong, I will not. My father is an old man, and respect is due to grey hairs.'

'His hair is red.'

'Red mingled with grey. He is more than thrice your age. He knows far better than you what is wise and just and reasonable. I will not sustain you when you act on caprice, but in a matter of right you may rest on me—only, I am quite sure, my father will never interfere with you, without occasion, unless you provoke him. He is annoyed with you now. Take my advice and be submissive. You will get your own way with a tongue of velvet, rather than with a tongue roughened to a rasp.'

She shook her hand free from his, and stood up.

'I will not remain here,' she said, 'to be insulted. I have sacrificed my pleasure downstairs, to sit with you, and listen to your droning talk, like the whirr of a winnowing machine, all about nothing, whilst below there is music, and

merry talk, and stories, and round games. So I am repaid. I will not come up here again till all are gone. Sit in the dark by yourself.'

'Send up Dennis Penhalligan,' said Gerans with a sigh. 'I want him to give me something for my eyes.'

'Send him up!' exclaimed Rose, in a tone of irritation. 'That is too bad! you will spoil our amusements by keeping him here, when he is wanted to sing, or play, or take a part in a game. You are selfish—in all things selfish, without a thought of me.'

She went out, and slammed the door; but as she stood on the landing before descending the stairs, she hesitated, and her hand on the banister shook. A qualm came over her conscience. She had spoken and acted unkindly to her husband. She half turned to run back, and throw herself into his arms and kiss his hot eyes. But she recalled his advice, and his warning not to expect support from him against Hender Gaverock, and her bosom heaved with anger; she set her pretty red lips, and with firm step descended the stairs.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MOSS-ROSE.

NEXT day was Sunday. Loveday was up early, looking at her flowers. She had been watching a moss-rose for some days, expecting its first bud to break. The bright morning sun had effected this, with its warm kiss, and Loveday picked the flower with delight; then, with instinctive kindness and unselfishness, ran up the hill to Towan, and without ringing entered the hall where breakfast was laid, and placed the moss-rose on Rose's plate. No one was in the room to observe her. She did not tarry, but ran home.

Rose, however, did not come down till late; Gaverock had made his own breakfast when she arrived in the hall; Mrs. Gaverock had hers taken to her; and Gerans was there talking to Penhalligan, who had come to see how his eyes were, on his way to church. Rose

was in her riding habit. She intended to go to church on Phœbus, her horse; the distance was considerable, and the road was muddy with the rain of yesterday. She made a laughing apology for her lateness; she had overslept herself, she said, and went to the head of the table to pour herself out a cup of tea. Then she saw the pretty bud on her plate. She looked up, and caught Penhalligan's eye; she coloured. The rose came from Nantsillan; there were no moss-roses at Towan. She concluded immediately that Dennis had brought it and put it in her plate for her. She said nothing, but pinned the bud into her bosom, then sat down and took a hasty meal.

Presently the front-door bell was rung, and Gerans, looking out, said, 'Rose, your horse is at the door.'

'I shall be ready in a minute,' she replied.

'I am not going to church to-day,' said Gerans. 'I will stay at home and nurse my eyes. Dennis, I dare say, will be kind enough to escort you, if my father has gone on before.'

They went out through the porch. The groom was holding Phœbus, a pretty roan, that might be said to belong to Rose, for she had

ridden him ever since she had been at Towan, and considered him as her horse, though he had not been bought for her, or formally made over to her.

'I do not know exactly what the time is,' said Rose. 'I do not object to being a little late at church, so long as I am not very late. I smile when I enter during the Confession, I blush if I am at the First Lesson, I would hide my face in my handkerchief at the Second.'

'What is this?' shouted old Gaverock, bursting out of the hall (he was attired for church, with a beaver hat on his head, very rough). 'What have you got Phœbus here for? Rose, you are not going to ride. Run upstairs and take off that habit at once. You are going to walk with me. I can't have Phœbus ridden to-day.'

'The road is dirty,' said Gerans.

'What if it be?' asked Hender Gaverock, turning sharp on him. 'Dirty roads don't drown. She shall walk. Petherick!'—to the groom—'take the horse back to the stable.'

'Stop,' said Dennis, laying his hand on the bridle, as the man was about to obey his master.

'I will ride to church,' said Rose, indignantly.

'I am in my habit ready. Gerans, help me up on Phœbus.'

'Mrs. Rose,' shouted the Squire, 'it won't do. Phœbus must not be used to-day. The shoe is too tight and pinches him. Run upstairs at once and change your habit.'

'I do not choose,' said Rose; 'I intend to ride.'

'I went into the stable yesterday, and saw he had been badly shod. I'll have the shoe off to-morrow,' said the Squire. 'Petherick, take him round.'

'A pinching shoe will not lame him,' argued Rose, her face clouding and colouring; 'the distance to the church is not so great as to injure him.'

'I have said it. That suffices,' exclaimed Gaverock.

Then Gerans came up to her, and said, 'Rose, do not be unreasonable, and lame Phœbus —you will spoil him for a ride in the week if you do.'

'Of course, it is I who am unreasonable, not Mr. Gaverock.'

'Take the horse round, Petherick,' ordered the Squire.

'I will ride,' said Rose, angrily, brushing past her husband. 'Here, Gerans, help me into my saddle.'

Gerans hesitated. Whilst he hesitated, Dennis stepped quickly to her aid, and in a moment had raised her to her place on Phœbus.

'Rose! Rose!' shouted the Squire in tones of amazement and indignation.

'Thank you, Mr. Penhalligan,' said she, 'for coming to my aid when my husband hung back.'

Then she whipped Phœbus, and dashed away.

'Penhalligan!' shouted old Gaverock, very red in the face, 'How dare you——'

'Mr. Gaverock,' interrupted the doctor, 'I beg you will be careful what words you address to me. I am not a dog or a daughter-in-law to be addressed imperiously.'

'Do you know, sir? Do you know who I am—that—that——' Old Gaverock could not finish his inquiry; his anger choked him, and he ended his question with a splutter.

'I know one thing very well,' said the doctor—'that the wishes of Mrs. Rose ought to be a law to you, and to your son.' Then he turned to go.

'Come back! I want a word with you,' roared the angry man. 'By Golly! am I to be bearded by a pettifogging Sawbones?' He ran after Penhalligan, as the surgeon did not arrest his steps. He laid his hand on his arm, and said angrily, 'Do you know, sir, who I am? I am Gaverock of Towan, who is not accustomed to be disobeyed, and who will not, *will not*, in his old age, endure what he would not permit in his youth.'

'Mr. Gaverock of Towan,' said Penhalligan, the veins in his forehead swollen and black, his dark eye flashing, 'I knew that these seadowns harboured many strange creatures; I learn now that they harbour also bears.'

'I give you notice!' roared the old man, beside himself with wrath. 'I will turn you out of Nantsillan. You shall not inhabit it, and be my neighbour one day longer than I can help.'

'You cannot desire my departure more heartily than myself, from a place where the people are as savage as their surroundings.'

Then he walked along the church road, leaving Mr. Gaverock bewildered with the new sensation of having been encountered by a man

who did not fear him, and who gave him as good as he took.

Penhalligan found Rose in the lane over the brow of the hill. She had reined in Phœbus. He came on with long strides, his hat drawn over his eyes, and his head down to conceal his agitation. His face was livid with rage, and his eyes sparkled.

'Thank you, Mr. Dennis,' she said, when he was level with her. 'This is not the first time you have acted as my champion. Once, when my guardian wanted to sell the house at Kenwyn, again to obtain for me an allowance, and now to save me a dirty walk. I am afraid, however, that this last intervention has been a mistake—Phœbus really limps. Still, I would not for the world go back to Towan and confess myself in the wrong, and beaten.'

'No harm will follow,' said the young surgeon, 'if you walk the horse. I will pace at your side. If he trips, my hand will grasp the bridle at the bit.'

'Is the Squire following?'

'I do not know. I think not. I have given him something to digest that does not agree with his stomach.'

'I hope I have not been the occasion of a quarrel.'

'There has been a quarrel, and a friendship ripped, which can never be rehealed.'

'Not between you and Gerans?'

'The friendship was between the Squire, not his son, and me,' said Penhalligan after a pause, with reserve in his tone. Rose slightly winced.

'I thought you and Gerans were such fast friends,' she said timidly.

Penhalligan made no reply.

'I am sure that Gerans always speaks of you with the warmest regard.'

'He can afford to do so; he has lost nothing through me.'

After that, neither spoke for full ten minutes. Dennis walked near the head of Phœbus, looking gloomily before him, and Rose looked back at intervals nervously, along the Towan lane, wishing, yet at the same time not wishing, that the Squire would appear—wishing, because she did not desire to be alone with Dennis; not wishing, because she dreaded the old man's anger.

The morning was as beautiful as an early summer morning could be. The hedges were brilliant with fresh fern and bursting flowers.

The honeysuckles were out, and as the path passed a bush with the trailing trumpet flowers, they traversed a zone of fragrance. The wild roses were blooming, white and blush pink.

The raindrops glittered on the sprays and grass. The may was not over, the thorn-bushes had shed most of their flowers in a white snow over the road, but flowers, turning pink before they fell, still hung in the bushes. When the sea was caught in glimpses through gates in the high hedge on the left, it was seen bluer than the sky, lost in it at the horizon, where a vapour hid the line of demarcation between sea and sky. The bells of the parish church, that lay in the valley, were wafted to their ears on the pleasant air.

Rose broke the silence, which was becoming painful. 'The Squire is a very determined man,' she said; 'one must bend or break who dares oppose him.'

Dennis turned his face, and looked up at her, like one awakening from a dream. 'Yes,' he said, and pressed his hat lower over his eyes; 'but all will not bend, or break. They will not, though he set his knee against them, and use his utmost strength for their destruction.'

'I hope—Mr. Penhalligan——' she began, and stopped the horse.

'There is no use hoping,' he answered, and urged Phœbus on. 'He has ordered me out of Nantsillan. It is his house, and he can do what he will with his own.'

'Oh, Mr. Dennis!' cried Rose, turning pale, and her heart standing still. She could say no more. Her pallor was succeeded by a rush of blood to her face; she—she by her persistence over a trifle had been the occasion of Dennis Penhalligan becoming homeless. The tears rose in her eyes. He did not look up at her; he walked on, with his hand on the bit and his eyes lowered.

Presently she said, in a choking voice, 'I am sorry—I am so, so sorry. I shall never forgive myself.'

He raised his eyes to her face, with a kindling glance, full of vehemence, and said, 'I am amply, most amply repaid by your pity.'

'Did not my husband put in a word for you with his father?' she asked with a tremulous voice.

Dennis laughed mockingly, bitterly. 'Not he. As the old one pipes, the young one whistles.'

Again ensued a silence. Rose's bosom heaved. The peal on the church bells changed.

'I am sorry, more sorry than I have words to say,' she murmured.

'Do not repeat that,' said Dennis, earnestly, leaving the head of Phœbus and coming by her foot. 'I cannot bear it. I am unaccustomed to sympathy. What matters one more kick along the road of life? It is only one more among the many I have received. You—you also will have your sorrows. If the old man has not spared me, he will not spare you. You will come to understand Beethoven's Sonata in C minor.'

'I have my sorrows already,' she said, and a sob escaped her breast.

'You!' he exclaimed, standing still, and Phœbus also stood, either startled by his loud tone or involuntarily arrested by the hand of Rose on the bridle. 'You—you have sorrows! You, whom I have always associated with unclouded joy!'

'Have I not cause to be unhappy?' she asked, 'with a father-in-law who browbeats me, who will not allow me my way in anything, who treats my opinions with contempt, as though I

were a child '—her pity for herself grew as she recited her wrongs—'and with a husband who will never stand by his wife, and see that she is not wronged? He swore at the altar to uphold and cherish me, and this is how he keeps his oath! I am—I am very wretched. And now I have become the unwitting cause of a wrong done to you.'

'Do not name that—it is nothing. The rich always spurn the poor.'

'If I may not mention it, still I must think of it,' continued Rose; then recurring to herself, and her own wrongs, she said, 'What am I, a poor young girl, feeble, thoughtless, helpless—I look around for someone to help, comfort, advise me, to be a stay to me, and a friend, and I find none!'

'Do not say that—it is not true,' said Dennis in a deep thrilling tone.

'No,' she said, and her tears flowed, tears of pity for herself. 'No, perhaps not. I have a friend. You have proved yourself one. You will always be my friend!'

'Your friend?' he asked, in a voice scarcely audible from emotion. 'Your friend! Oh Rose!' —and his flashing eyes met hers. He seized

her hand, that hung down, and pressed it in his own. 'Your friend! ever! ever!'

He pressed her hand so vehemently, and, in his agitation, so inconsiderately, that she cried out from pain. Gerans had pressed that hand the evening before, and then she had exclaimed, 'You hurt me!' She remembered that now, and contrasted the fierce agonising squeeze of Dennis with the firm, but sparing pressure of the hand of Gerans, which had not hurt her, though she had affected to pretend it had.

The bells ceased pealing, and the single bell tolled, the token that service would begin in five minutes. The clergyman was already vesting.

Then Rose touched Phœbus with her whip, to make him hurry on. Her horse was really lame, and he could not go fast. Nevertheless, she reached the church in time, and took her place by herself in the Towan pew. The church was for the most part seated with old carved oak benches, such as remain in a great number of churches in the West to this day, and which were, fifty or sixty years ago, much more common. The bench ends were richly, even profusely carved, but in the Towan aisle they had

been swept away to make room for a square baize-lined pew. This box had the advantage of screening Rose's face from the congregation, except when she stood up, and therefore of isolating her, and leaving her to her own thoughts. In her pew, Rose became cool and collected. The influence of the place made itself felt, and the solemn words of the service entering at her ear lodged in her mind.

By degrees she became aware that she had acted foolishly, if not wrongly. Rose loved Gerans, but she loved herself better. She was, naturally, a coquette, and the way in which she had been reared had fostered her vanity, love of admiration, and self-will. Her heart had not veered from Gerans to Dennis. She did not care for the latter, more than so far as his homage flattered her vanity.

She was provoked with Gerans; she was angry with him, but she loved him, not passionately indeed, but sincerely. She was provoked with him, partly because he was so amenable to his father, but also because he took his bliss so equably, and he was so undemonstrative in his love. It would do him good to be made jealous, to feel her displeasure. It would goad him into

more energy in trying to win, and more solicitude to retain her affection.

These thoughts flew through her mind during the service. Then she recalled what had just taken place, and she felt she had gone too far with Dennis; she had no right to complain to any man of her husband, and to ask his support in the place of her husband. She felt this so strongly that as she came out of church she looked round for Dennis, and when she caught his eye deliberately removed the moss-rose bud from her bosom, and threw it down in the grass beside the path. She supposed that he had put the bud on her plate, and by throwing it away she intended him to understand that she refused his offer of friendship and declined his homage.

But Dennis, who followed, misread her mind. He stooped, and picked up the bud. He remembered the look she had cast him when she found it on her plate, and, now that she had thrown it down, he thought that she had cast it in his way for him to take and keep in remembrance of her, and as an encouragement.

A moment later Gerans appeared, leading Phœbus, from the church stable.

'Though I could not come to service, I came

to assist you and escort you home,' he said. 'Petherick has assured me that the horse is lamed with bad shoeing.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you, Gerans, for coming,' she said without a look at Dennis; who supposed she had cast the rose to him, as a pledge of her regard, at the moment she saw her husband approach.

'Gerans, I am so pleased to have your company home.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROKEN RESOLUTIONS.

Dennis had sneered at the idea of Gerans interfering with his father when the latter ordered the doctor to leave Nantsillan. Nevertheless, Gerans had interfered. He waited till Dennis was out of sight, and the old man's choler was somewhat cooled, to say, 'You did not mean what you said, father. Dennis is not given notice to quit.'

'I will have nothing more to do with the fellow,' stormed the old Squire. 'He shall not set foot across my threshold; he shall not dose my wife; he shall not live on my land. I have given way to him too much; I have taken his opinion on sundry matters, not surgical and medicinal, and that has puffed him up with conceit. I'll do clean contrary to all he has advised. I will sell the Kenwyn estate. I will not make Rose any allowance. I will call in old Doctor

Squance from Padstow, if your mother must have a doctor to humbug her.'

'My dear father, you will use your own discretion about these matters, later, when you have weighed them. Not now, when you are heated. As for Dennis, he must not be turned out of Nantsillan.'

'Not turned out! I'll rout him out with a red-hot poker if he stays a minute after his time.'

'You cannot, you must not. A doctor has had that cottage as long as I can remember, or you either.'

'Time some other trade should go into it.'

'There is no other house into which he can go.'

'Yes, there are two or three in the village.'

'No; single rooms in which he might be received as a lodger. But, remember, father, he has his sister with him. We must consider Loveday.'

'Why should we consider her? She is no relation.'

'My dear father,' said Gerans, firmly, 'you must consider Loveday. She has been most kind and attentive to mother; scarce a day

has passed without her coming here to see her——'

'And cocker her up in the delusion that she is ill. All your mother wants is a good routing up. She has nothing the matter with her but the vapours.'

'Whether Loveday has acted wisely or unwisely does not affect the case. She has acted as her kind heart prompted, and her visits have been of the greatest comfort to my mother. My mother loves her as if she were her own daughter—loves her far more, clings to her more, far more than to Rose. Rose is very good, but she does not suit mother as Loveday suits her.'

'Your mother did without Loveday in times past, she must do without her in time to come.'

'Consider how useful she was when you were at your wits' ends with the servants, during our absence.'

'The maidens!' exclaimed the old Squire, firing up. 'I will give you an instance of their stupidity. I put out my wading boots, that cost me three guineas, to be rubbed over with tallow. Will you believe me, after larding the boots, they set them in a rat-run between the

sink and the larder, and of course, in the morning, the rats had eaten the topleathers away—holes as big as a crown?'

'It is rarely that I have interfered with what you have determined,' said Gerans, returning to his point; 'but now I must remonstrate against your sending Dennis Penhalligan and his sister out of Nantsillan. The neighbourhood will cry shame on you if you do.'

'Let the neighbourhood dare to prescribe to me what I am to do with my houses and tenants!' said the Squire, wrathfully.

'Your better feelings will not allow you.'

'I have said it,' exclaimed Hender Gaverock. 'What would the neighbourhood say if it heard that I had spoken a thing one day and withdrawn it the next? You ought to know that what I say I stick to.'

'I entreat you to forbear, father.'

'You are pertinacious. Why should I forbear? Show me a proper reason. Those you have given are chaffy, worthless.'

Then Gerans told his father the whole truth about Constantine and Loveday. The surprise, indignation, and rage of the old man knew no bounds. The story had been kept from him at

first, lest he should burst forth into violence, and in his violence say words about his dead son which he would afterwards regret, but which would wound mortally his weak and failing wife. But now his wrath took another turn: he cast no blame on Constantine. He was at the moment occupied with the Penhalligans, and the secret now divulged exasperated him against them to the last degree. He was angry with Gerans for not having told him before, but he was furious against Loveday and her brother for thrusting themselves uninvited into relationship with his family. 'The sister of the beggarly Sawbones!' he cried, walking up and down the gravel before the house, with huge strides, 'to dare to inveigle my son—my son, into marriage with herself—the hussy who says I do not know women! I know them so well that I see through her machinations. Do you think, you fool, Gerans, that she came here out of Christian charity to your mother? Not a bit; she came to work herself into a place in this house, and when she had got into a snug corner, to be able to snap her fingers in my face and dare me to turn her out because she was my daughter-in-law.' Then he flew out in another direction.

'I don't believe it—not a word of it! The impudent wench! It was a love affair, and no marriage at all. She has deceived you, lied to you! I will not believe till I see the marriage lines. I will go to Nantsillan at once, and dare her to produce them. And that Sawbones brother! He thought to trade on his connection! To patch up his miserable practice with the recommendation of the Gaverocks his kinsmen, and send out his bottles of jalap and boxes of pills sealed with our crest! Golly! my blood boils. Gerans, I shall never forgive you for keeping this infamy concealed from me. Now, it is well that I know it. Not for another day, if I can help it, shall these beggars live in my house. That was the meaning of sending Loveday to Exeter, was it, where my son Con was in an office? A deep-laid scheme. A clever scheme. A scheme worthy of that black-eyed crafty hussy! But it shall not answer. I am glad I know it. I will go down at once and force her to tell me the truth. I always knew that Con was a milksop; I never thought him such a cursed fool! But Adam was no match for Eve, and so, I suppose, one must not wonder if Con fell a prey to another intriguing woman.

I not know women! I know this, that they can combine the subtlety and wickedness of the serpent with the innocent outward appearance of the dove.'

In vain did Gerans strive to abate his father's fury, and divert him from his purpose of an immediate interview with Loveday. He entreated him to postpone the visit till the morrow. The old man would listen to no advice; in his headstrong temper and roused passion he rushed off in the direction of the cottage, shaking Gerans from him when he held his arm to detain him.

Then Gerans, greatly troubled at having made matters worse by telling his father what had so long been kept from him, resolved to go down to the church, meet Rose, and urge her to do what she could to appease the irate old man. Perhaps if she made her submission, his anger would abate.

He arrived at the church during the sermon. Instead of going in, he went to the stables provided for the horses of churchgoers from a distance, and brought out Phœbus, in readiness for Rose.

He helped her into the saddle, and led the

horse away; he wanted to get ahead of the people who were about to stream along the same road. She, penitent for what she had done, did not look behind her, nor say a word to Dennis. She held the reins, and allowed her husband to urge on the lame horse.

'I see Phœbus does limp,' she said. 'However, he is not lame. When the shoe is taken off he will be right. The road is very muddy; I should not have liked to walk it. If your father had not been so peremptory, I might, however, have gone on foot, but I will not be ordered about—like you.'

She could not help it; even when penitent she must say something sharp, and also excuse herself, when half acknowledging that she had been in the wrong. When they were some way ahead of those coming from church in the same direction, and quite out of earshot, Gerans said, in a low tone, 'Rose, I want your help. I am afraid my father is much put out. I wish that you would tell him you are sorry that you took Phœbus. It will please him. You see the horse is unfit to be ridden.'

'He will be right when the shoe is off.'

'Do you know, Rose, that my father, in a fit

of impetuosity, gave notice to the Penhalligans to leave their cottage? What is to be done? Where is poor Loveday to go? I wish you would intercede with father and get him to yield in this one matter.'

Rose's lips closed tightly. 'I suppose,' she said constrainedly, 'if "poor Loveday" is to go, that poor Dennis must go also.'

'Yes, of course; but that is not such a great concern. But our dear Loveday!—I cannot bear to think of it. What will mother do? Where can Loveday go?'

'I should have supposed it of far more consequence that Mr. Dennis should be housed than "our dear Loveday."'

'Not at all,' answered Gerans, without perceiving that she was speaking ironically. 'He, as a man, can find lodgings somewhere, but she—there is no place where they could be taken in together.'

'And,' said Rose, 'it would be so very hard that Loveday should not be within a gunshot of Towan.'

'Yes, quite so,' answered Gerans. 'It would not do at all; she could not then be in and out of our house at all times.'

'That would be intolerable indeed.'

'I do not know—intolerable, but very inconvenient.'

'There I differ from you,' said Rose, coldly. 'I am not sure but that her frequent visits are inconvenient at present, and I can quite imagine that they may become intolerable.'

'I cannot see that,' Gerans replied, not in the least understanding his wife. 'My father is so exasperated that he may forbid her as well as Dennis the house.'

'It is, of course, of far more importance that Loveday should be at home there than that Mr. Dennis should be admitted.'

'Of course it is. My dear mother is so attached to her——'

'Your mother only?'

'No, all of us—you, I know, like her, love her dearly, and I—I am very fond of her.'

'I suppose that, as we are made one by marriage, we must share everything, even our attachments.'

'Yes, Rose, so it ought to be, and so I hope it is. Loveday is so good, noble, and true, that we must value and love her. You do both.'

He was wholly unconscious of the irrita-

tion his words caused. He spoke of Loveday's trouble, because he thought that would touch and move his wife more than any consideration for the doctor. He was devoid of jealousy himself, and had no conception that his wife could be jealous of him and Loveday. He regarded the latter so completely as a sister, that the thought that she could be regarded in any other light by him never entered his head.

'My father has gone down to Nantsillan,' continued Gerans. 'I hope he will control himself; he was very excited when he went off. Loveday is there alone, I know.'

'You know, do you? How do you know that?'

'Because little Ruth came out of church. One or the other must remain at home to cook the dinner.'

'At *home*,' repeated Rose. 'Do you mean Nantsillan Cottage when you say "at home"?'

'Yes,' he answered, and turned and looked at her. 'I do not understand you. Nantsillan is their home.'

'Oh! you spoke of it as home—as your home.'

'How can you so misinterpret me?' said Gerans. Then he sighed. It struck him that she was in a captious and unyielding mood, but he did not see the reason for it.

Phœbus went slowly on. Rose's cheeks burned. All her penitence and good resolutions were gone. She was angry with her husband for talking so persistently of Loveday. After they had gone on in silence a little way, Gerans stepped back, and, laying his hand on the crupper, said, 'Rose, dear, speak a word for them to father. He must not turn them out; they have had troubles enough without our adding to them—more troubles than you know. They are very poor, and have made a hard fight to get on. I fear this change would break their back.'

'So you creep behind my skirt, and thrust me on, because you dare not yourself interfere?'

'Rose, I have spoken, but my father will not listen.'

'That is false,' said Rose, vehemently; 'you said nothing. You had not the courage to stand up for a friend. You are a coward!'

'Rose!' exclaimed Gerans, withdrawing his hand from the back of the horse, and colouring

—'Rose!' he repeated in a tone of reproach and pain and astonishment.

She did not spare him. She had no pity. She went on with flaming cheeks and sparkling eyes: 'Nothing is to be expected of a man who will not take the part of his own wife. No wonder if such a fellow is too timid to defend his own friend. I know some who would never have suffered me to be ill-treated and insulted, had I listened to one or other of them, instead of to you. I wish I had never seen your face.'

Gerans turned deadly pale. He said, with quivering lips, 'Rose, you were not forced to take me.'

'No; but when I took you, I did not know you as I do now.'

Gerans had hold of her rein. He let go, and walked on. He did not look at her, he hung his head. Not two months had elapsed since they had been married, and his happiness was gone.

All the annoyances, disappointments, slights she had undergone, real or imaginary, justly or unjustly, in Towan, were alive and moving and gnawing in her soul. Another man would never have allowed her to be subjected to these.

Dennis Penhalligan would have protected her from the slightest breath of offence. Dennis was not afraid of old Gaverock. He defied him to his face when Rose's pleasure was concerned. How Gerans had hung back—that morning at the door! How Dennis had sprung forward to lift her into her seat! They were men of different stamp. She began to cry. Gerans heard her, and her tears fell as fire-drops on his heart. He could not speak to her. He had nothing to say to her. She did not love him.

When they arrived at Towan, he handed her from the horse, but said nothing. He did not look at her. She went within. He walked away, with bowed head.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SENTENCE OF EXILE.

HENDER GAVEROCK, in his Sunday suit, but without his rough beaver hat, strode down to Nantsillan, opened the cottage door without knocking, and, entering the front room or little hall, shouted, 'Loveday Penhalligan, where are you? I want you. Come here.'

Loveday was in the kitchen. She came to him at once. She knew by his voice, and she saw by his face, that he was in a passion, and had lost all control over himself. Loveday wore a white apron, that covered her bosom and was fastened on her shoulders. Her gown was deep blue. She looked very pretty with her rich dark hair, lustrous eyes, and oval, pale face. She was not alarmed, but she felt at once that she must exercise great discretion with a man who had no command over what he said or what he did.

'I am at your service, Mr. Gaverock,' said Loveday. 'Will you take a chair?' Then she seated herself.

'No, I will not,' he answered roughly. 'Why do you sit down? Stand up when I speak to you.' He could browbeat her better, face to face with her, than with her in a chair, by the hearth, showing him only her profile.

'You must excuse me, Mr. Gaverock. I know you will, you are so kind and considerate. I have been standing all the morning, and a moment in a chair is a boon.'

'I have heard a scandalous story,' said the Squire, pacing the little hall, and turning his great rough, shaggy head towards her, as he strode, with his hands behind his back, under the tails of his plum-coloured coat. 'I have heard a scandalous story, and I have come here about it.'

'Then, Squire,' said Loveday, gently, 'you have come to the wrong place.'

'I have not. I know what I am about, where I am.'

'You have come to call on a gentlewoman,' said Loveday, 'and are her visitor, in her parlour.'

Gaverock was somewhat abashed, but he was too highly incensed for a soft word to affect him more than momentarily.

'Mistress Loveday *Penhalligan*'—he emphasised the surname—'I have just heard a story about you and Constantine, outrageous, detestable, scandalous.'

'Excuse me, Mr. Gaverock, I have green gooseberries to pick.' She made him a slight bow, and withdrew into the kitchen. He continued striding up and down the hall, waiting for her. After a few minutes she returned, looked him full in the face, and reseated herself, with a dish of gooseberries in her lap, and put an empty pie-dish, for the stalks, on the table. She was so cool, so collected, that Gaverock was disconcerted. She fixed her honest dark eyes on him, and said, 'You have heard that Constantine and I were married in Exeter. It is true, but I did not wish that it should be known.'

'It is not true. I dispute it. Show me the certificate.'

'Mr. Gaverock,' she said, raising her head, 'I excuse those hasty and ill-considered words; but I will not suffer them to be repeated, nor

endure words like them. I cannot show you the certificate, because I did not furnish myself with a copy. But I will write, or you can write, if you doubt my word of honour, and obtain a copy of the register from St. Sidwell's Church in Exeter.'

'I do not believe it. I will not believe it,' stormed the angry man; 'it is a disgraceful imposition. What took place between you and Con, you know best, but I will not allow——' She was gone. The basin of gooseberries was left on the table; she had quietly and easily withdrawn.

He paced the room again. It was full ten minutes before she returned, and resumed her place and dish of berries.

'How can I talk if you run out of the room every few minutes?' he asked.

'How can I stay when you forget to whom you are speaking?' she replied. 'I am your daughter-in-law. I did not seek the honour. I shrank from it. It was pressed upon me. I have endeavoured to keep the relationship a secret. I shall bring no dishonour on the name of Gaverock; that name, however, will be dishonoured by any man who bears it and fails

to behave as a gentleman in the presence of a lady.'

'Do you mean to imply——' began Gaverock, threateningly.

'I imply nothing,' said Loveday, quietly; 'I state a fact that you yourself must admit. Would it not be dishonourable of a man who is a gentleman by birth and position to forget what is due to a lady, and address her in terms of insolence when she is alone, with no one by to protect her?'

Gaverock was very angry. He thrust his hands into his pockets and paced the room.

'You have not replied to my question,' said Loveday.

He would not answer.

'Mr. Gaverock,' she said, 'you want to talk to me, and I am ready to speak with you; but I will only consent to a conversation on these terms—that you sit opposite me, Mistress Loveday, and hold the pie-dish into which I put the gooseberry stalks.'

'I am not here to be made a fool of,' said the Squire.

'Nor am I here to waste valuable time. The gooseberries are to be made fool of, not the

Squire of Towan. That is left to himself and his inconsiderate temper.'

She set a chair for him opposite herself, and held the back, waiting for him to occupy it. He shortened his tramp and his steps, hesitated, drew near the chair, went back, came again, and finally seated himself. Then she put the basin in his hands.

'What is this for?' he asked angrily.

'For the stalks of the gooseberries, and the little brown ends, which must not be allowed in a fool, or it spoils it. I dare say you know that by experience.'

'Miss Loveday,' said Hender Gaverock, 'you and your brother will have to turn out of this house. I have given him notice. I will have none of you in my neighbourhood any more. Your brother, madam, has defied me, *me*; interfered with me, *me*; and——'

'Take care of the pie-dish!' she said as he flung himself back impetuously in the chair.

'And has called me a bear—me, *me!*'

'Well, Mr. Gaverock. Is there anything so dreadful and offensive in that? A bear is rough, tough, and indomitable. You do not pretend to be sleek as a greyhound; all your muscles

are as hawsers, and who is there that has ventured to tame you?'

This recognition of his roughness, toughness, and indomitability, three qualities on which he prided himself, somewhat mollified the old Squire.

'And because of this, you are going to expel us from this house? This is not kind.'

'Not for this only,' answered Gaverock. 'I will not have the doctor trade on his relationship, and you establish a claim to be one of us.'

'Have we done so? Have we shown the smallest desire to do this? Who told you of my marriage? Not Dennis?'

'No, Gerans.'

'You have not heard anything about it from the neighbours,' said Loveday; 'it was I who begged Gerans to keep it secret. But for my urgency it would have been the talk of the county. If now the tidings spread, it will be through you, not through me. Unless Gerans has told Rose, she is ignorant. The secret was in the hands of Mrs. Gaverock, Gerans, and Dennis.'

'My wife knows—and never told me!'

'She knows. Constantine had himself told

her part of the secret; I confided to her the rest.'

'Women cannot keep secrets—it will spread like thistledown in a week.'

'You do not know women, or you would not say so. It has been known to Mrs. Gaverock since last autumn twelvemonth, when poor Constantine was drowned, and whom has she told? No one. Whom have I told? If the story circulate you will set it running.'

'I—I do not want it to get about. I would hush it up if possible. I am too vexed, too indignant—too ashamed.'

'It is I,' said Loveday, gently, 'who have cause to be ashamed, not you. And I am ashamed—deeply humbled, and there is not an hour of the day in which it does not weigh on me.'

'You!—it was an honour.'

'I do not see it so. I did wrong. I consented to marry Constantine privately; I will not reproach him; but I may say that I neither intended nor expected that any secret should have been made of the marriage, when once it had taken place. A secret *was* made of it, and I have had to suffer. I am suffering now from

it. When poor Constantine was dead, I thought to bury my secret in forgetfulness. No advantage could come of divulging it. But as it has leaked out—it cannot be helped.'

'I do not want it to go farther. Why should we have this put into the mouths of half Cornwall?'

'Exactly—why should we? I do not ask for recognition. Dennis has no such desire. It lies with you to publish or suppress what has been confided to you.'

'Oh, I! It is no such honour to me——' Then with Loveday's calm face before him, full of dignity, and her soft eyes fixed on him, he became conscious that he was about to make a rude remark, unworthy of a gentleman.

He considered for awhile. If he turned Dennis Penhalligan out of Nantsillan, no doubt the surgeon would go about complaining of the wrong done him by the man whose son had married his sister. He would do the thing of all others most likely to publish the affair.

'Are you not treating us with undue severity,' said Loveday, 'in banishing us from this cottage? You know there is no other house in the place that we can have. You are therefore

forcibly separating my brother and me, and breaking up our poor little home. A young man beginning professional life has not an easy time, and it is surely harsh to make it more painful to him than need be. My offence is not mine alone. Poor Constantine, who married me, was your own flesh and blood. If there be fault on my side, and I freely admit it, blame attaches to him also. Why should the burden of expiation fall on my brother and me alone? Why should your family bear none of it? My brother knew nothing of the marriage till Constantine's return, the ensuing autumn. He was not consulted. He was kept as much in ignorance as yourself. It is not right that he should suffer for what I have done.'

'He has offended me,' said Gaverock.

'How, I do not know,' Loveday said.

'Then I will tell you. Phœbus was ill-shod and like to go lame. Rose insisted on riding him to church, and when I forbade her, and she persisted, your brother took her part, and helped her into the saddle.'

'He acted wisely,' said Loveday. 'Rose is wilful, and resolved to have her own way. She will lame Phœbus, and find that she cannot ride

him again for many days. She will be forced to admit that you were right, and that she was wrong. Henceforth she will show you more deference. She has been taught in the only way she could be taught, by experience, that your orders are not capriciously given, but rest on common sense.'

'There is something in that,' said the Squire.

'My brother saw that clearly, and he allowed her to have her own way, that she might return to Towan ashamed of her obstinacy. Sunday is a day for acquiring moral lessons.'

'I will tell you what it is, Miss Pen——' He stopped, corrected himself, and recommenced his sentence. 'I will tell you what it is, Loveday. I am more incensed against you than against him. His conduct, as you say, is capable of being given a different interpretation from that I gave it ; and what he said may be accepted as complimentary, though I cannot say I thought he spoke it with that intention. Still, as his manners are peculiar, and unformed, I will suppose that he did mean to compliment me. I admit that I am rough, vigorous, and tough—I am that, as every sane man on this coast knows, and no man has yet been able to

throw me, though I have wrestled with the best men in Cornwall. But I am a man of my word. When I have said a thing, I stick to it. I have said that I would turn you out of Nantsillan, and so I will. I could never look Gerans in the face, never order him about, if I were to go back from what I have said.'

'You may put down the pie-dish, Mr. Gaverock,' said Loveday; 'I have finished the gooseberries.'

'Ah,' growled the Squire, 'I had green gooseberry pudding on Whitsunday, but the maidens were not looked after, and to save themselves trouble did not pick the gooseberries. But that is neither here nor there. We are not talking of gooseberries. As I said, I stick to my word, and I have said I would turn you out of Nantsillan. Gerans will expect it. I expect it of myself. But—there are two of you. You are the chief offender. If you will go, I will not be hard on the doctor. He, at all events, is not a relation; but you—if your story be correct, and I suppose I must admit that it is—you stand to me in the surprising and close relationship of daughter-in-law. Now I am not prepared for this. It will take my mind some

time to get used to the idea. I shall have to determine on a course of action. You must go. It is best for you. It is necessary for me. I do not say, Go away for ever, but go away for awhile—for a twelvemonth, till I have had time to digest this startling piece of news, and have decided whether to recognise you or not. If you will consent to this, I will retreat so far as to allow the doctor to remain here. This understanding must be come to between us, that not one word is said of the—the circumstance just told me, this startling news sprung on me, when so unprepared to receive it. No one must know of it till I have made up my mind what is to be done, and if, at the end of a twelvemonth, I refuse to acknowledge you, then you and your brother must accept my refusal as final. If you choose to come to my terms, I will say no more about his vacating Nantsillan.'

'I accept the terms,' said Loveday. 'I accept them heartily. I am willing to go. I believe it will be best for myself, as you say, though on other grounds. I will go somewhere, and earn a little money, so as to be a help to poor Dennis.'

As Squire Gaverock walked back to Towan

he said to himself, 'That young woman has some sense in her—for a woman. She did not forget what was due to me; she maintained a proper respect. If she only had money, I would rather have her as my daughter-in-law than Miss Vanity Scatterbrain, who has not yet learned her place.'

In about half an hour after the Squire had gone Dennis entered the cottage.

'Oh, Dennis!' said Loveday, who came to him from the kitchen on hearing his step, 'Mr. Gaverock has been here whilst you were at church. He has been told all. He is highly incensed against me. He was very angry at first with you, but that is passed away.'

'He has given me notice to quit the house,' said Dennis. He had not raised his eyes to his sister on entering, and now he looked furtively at her. He saw that her eyes were swimming with tears. 'Is that what has made you cry?'

'No, Dennis; he will allow you to remain, but I must go.'

'You! Why?'

'Because of my marriage with Con. He cannot make up his mind whether to recognise it or not; and he has made me promise to

go away for a twelvemonth. But he will not disturb you.'

Dennis drew a long breath. He did not exhibit much concern at the prospect of losing his sister.

Suddenly, after drying her tears, Loveday exclaimed—

'Dennis, what is that rose in your button-hole? Where did you get it?'

He looked away, as her searching eyes were on his face.

'Dennis, I know that rose. It is from our garden; there is but one.'

'Well,' he said roughly, 'if you know the rose, why do you ask about it?'

'Because—oh, Dennis!—I gave it to Rose Gaverock. That is, I carried it up to Towan, and put it in her plate at the breakfast table. How came you by it?'

'I picked it up,' he answered, with a sullen look and impatience in his tone.

She watched his face eagerly with alarm and pain.

'Oh, Dennis,' she said, 'why did you pick it up?'

He turned angrily on her, and said—

'Loveday, this is intolerable. I will not stand here to be catechised.'

'Dennis, dear brother'—Loveday spoke in a low, pleading tone, and put her hand on him—'you picked it up because it was hers, because she had worn it. I see it in your face. This must not be. Dennis, she is lost to you, she belongs to Gerans; and you must not, without sin, lay a thought to her. Dennis, dear Dennis, I have noticed that you have not crushed and cast out of your heart the love you bore her. But it is a duty. You must be true, and good, and honourable, and a Christian. Oh, Dennis'—she pressed on him, and put up her other hand beseechingly on his arm—'let me take the rose away; and as I pluck it, be brave, and pluck every thought of her out of your heart.'

She put her delicate, slender fingers to the lappet of his coat. He sprang back, cast her off, his dark eyes glared, and his brows contracted.

'Have you done with this preaching?' he said. 'I have borne from you more than I will endure for the future. It is well you are going. I am sick of prying and peeping eyes;

go as soon as you can. I had rather be alone. I am tired of your officious care.'

'Oh, Dennis!' she said, and covered her eyes; then fled the room, and buried her face on her pillow. She had lost her brother's love, and was banished alike from her home and his heart.

CHAPTER XXX.

SAMPHIRE.

During the early dinner Gerans was silent. Rose, on the other hand, was lively. She did her utmost to let Gaverock, the father, and her husband see that she was in good spirits, and quite unaffected by what had taken place. But on this occasion she had an uphill scramble. Hender Gaverock was not in his jovial, boisterous humour; and Gerans said nothing. Moreover, Rose was not well at ease with her conscience, and felt disposed rather to cry than to laugh. This, however, was the last thing she would allow either of the men to suspect. Mrs. Gaverock came in to dinner, but she was never to be relied upon to furnish topics of conversation and keep up a flagging talk. She seemed, on this occasion, to be conscious that something had gone wrong, and to be more than usually depressed by this consciousness. She was a

quiet, faded old lady; very ready to do her duty in the house as far as her physical powers allowed; but she was too diffident of her knowledge, too narrow in her interests, too much afraid of her husband, to be of much use solidly. She was a good listener, a kind sympathiser; and in opinions she always agreed with the last speaker, because she never could see more than one side of any question at a time. She looked from her husband to Gerans, and then to Rose, with perplexity and timidity, afraid to ask if anything was the matter and unable to explain their moods. That Rose's hilarity was put on she knew by her feminine instinct; but in her innocent, humble heart, she attributed it to her goodness in desiring to brighten a dull meal and recover the spirits of her father-in-law and husband. She was struck with admiration at Rose's ability and energy, an ability and energy of which she was herself devoid and incapable.

After dinner, Rose gave her mother-in-law one arm, and Gerans gave her one on the other side, and they helped her back to the sofa in the parlour, where she had her Bible and Church Service and a volume of Blair's Sermons on a

tea-table at her side. She had gone religiously through the form of prayer for the morning, and would do the same in the afternoon with Rose to help her, and such of the servants as could not be spared to go to church. The performance was dreary and not very improving. The Psalms were divided among those who could read, each taking a verse, and in the case of the servants hashing it, and in the case of the scullery-maid spelling it and making nonsense out of it. Rose galloped away with her verse, her Truro maid trotted with hers, Mrs. Gaverock's verse went along at an amble, but the rest were in various conditions of crawl and tumble. The Lessons were gone through in the same way; and no one, when it came to her turn, had the faintest idea of what she was reading about. However, it was all well intended.

Gerans withdrew. His mother cast a sad look after him. She feared that religion was losing its hold on her son, as he shrank from these spirit-deadening exercises. Rose would have run away had she dared, but she had sufficient grace to be sensible that it would be kind and dutiful to remain.

'We must allow the servants time to dine and wash up,' said Mrs. Gaverock, 'and then we will begin.'

'Yes,' answered Rose, with her mouth down at the corners. She was standing by the window, looking out, watching Gerans as he left the house. There was a dejection about him—affecting his walk, his bearing, his face—she had never seen in him before. She knew the cause, and she relented towards him, for she really did love him.

'What can be the matter with father and Gerans?' asked Mrs. Gaverock, as she turned over the pages of Blair in quest of a sermon that would do to read to the maids. 'They were neither of them in their usual spirits at dinner. Do you know the reason?'

'No, aunt.'

'To-morrow is Gerans's birthday. Have you prepared something for him? I have knitted him a pair of mitts, though I do not think he will wear them. Still, he will value them. They will tell him he has been thought of.'

'I have nothing, aunt. I forgot about his birthday.'

'Which of these two sermons will do best, Rose? Just cast your eye over them and give me your opinion.'

'My dear aunt, either will do equally well: they are just like each other and all the rest; the same words only differently arranged. And as for ideas, they are, like the raisins in the cakes uncle complains of, conspicuous by their absence. When I was at school we called these plum-loaves milestone cakes, because of the distance between the raisins. As for the ideas in the sermons, the distance between them is to be measured by geographical miles, which are seven hundred and ninety-five feet and four-fifths longer than the statute mile.'

When the service was over, Rose's feelings were in an irritated condition. She heartily wished that Goliath had killed David, and prevented him from writing Psalms; and that with the Destruction of Jerusalem the First and Second Lessons had gone to make the blaze brighter.

Gerans returned somewhat later. The service had lasted quite an hour and a half. Every verse spelled and made nonsense of by the scullery-maid had occupied three minutes.

Rose was sitting by the drawing-room window, looking out for his return. She saw him arrive with head down.

'He seems still very unhappy,' thought Rose. 'Perhaps I was a little too sharp with him.' Her heart beat fast.

Mrs. Gaverock said something, and Rose answered incoherently.

The drawing-room window was open. Would he come to it?—lean his elbow on the sill, and stand there and speak to her? If he would come, she would address him cheerfully, and give him a tender look, which would make him forget any hasty word she might have spoken. But Gerans did not turn his head and look towards the parlour window. She heard his steps in the hall, and listened. He would come along to the parlour to his mother and her. He did not do so. Then a hard look came on her face. If Gerans had not noticed her at the window, it was his duty to come after her into the room where she sat. She was convinced that Gerans did not choose to see her, and she threw up her head haughtily. If he did not want a reconciliation, neither did she. If he would not apologise to her,

she would not go out of her way to seek him.

'I hear Gerans in the next room,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'Call him to me, Rose.'

Rose had to be twice asked to do this before she complied. Then she went to the door and said coldly, 'Your mother wants you.'

'I will come,' he said, and entered the parlour.

'Gerans,' said the old lady, 'what is this I hear about the samphire picking? Are you going to-morrow?'

'Yes, mother; it is in condition now. Loveday wants to pickle some and send it to her cousin in Exeter, and Rose will want some for this house, and Madam Loveys also.'

'Loveday first, and I only next,' said Rose, shortly, frowning.

'No!—not so. Dennis and Anthony join me. Loveday always has her store in now, and so do you, mother. I told Anthony and Dennis about it yesterday. We may as well all go together. Indeed, we must help each other; the rocks are so precipitous that we cannot get the samphire without a rope.'

'Oh, Gerans, be careful!'

He laughed, but not cheerfully—not his usual careless, gay laugh. 'I shall be careful enough; but if I am over the edge of the cliff, it lies with Dennis and Anthony to be careful. Dennis cannot go over an edge, he turns giddy at a precipice; and Anthony is so slow and clumsy.'

'Do they hold the rope?'

'Yes, attached to my waist. If they let go, don't expect me home to-morrow, for home I shall not come.'

'Take some one else. Take Petherick or Jago.'

'My dear mother, have no fear. There are not two more powerful young men in these parts than Dennis and Anthony, and *they* will not let me go, they love me too well.'

'Yes, but they may lack nerve.'

'Dennis has nerve. The only fear is lest Anthony should go to sleep at his rope end.'

'Oh, Gerans!' exclaimed his mother. 'Do not be angry with me. All the samphire in the world is not worth your life. Give up this expedition. My mind forebodes ill.'

He stooped over her and kissed her.

'You are weak and nervous,' he said. 'Have

no uneasiness about me. I have none for myself.'

As he went out of the room he cast a glance at his wife. Rose stood with averted face.

'Do you know what you are looking at?' asked Mrs. Gaverock, following the direction of her eyes. 'On that window-jamb is marked the height of Gerans on each of his birthdays till he was full grown. He will never stand higher now than the highest score; but—he may lie lower than the lowest. It was so with Con.' Then her tears flowed.

On the morrow, the three young men—taking with them a coil of new rope, bought recently at St. Ives, and sure to stand any strain put on it—went along the cliffs together, above the sea, in quest of samphire.

The samphire derives its name from Saint-Pierre, because it is ripe and ready to be pickled about St. Peter's Day—that is, June the twenty-ninth. It is a fleshy stalked and leaved plant, with pale whitey-green flowers like those of the fennel. It only grows on such crags above the sea as the gulls delight to haunt, above the lash of the waves, but ready to sip of though not to be engulfed in their brine. It sprouts out of

rocky crevices in thick clusters, enlivening the bald cliff faces where nothing else will grow. Not one of our native plants can at all compare with this in flavour when pickled with vinegar and spices. It is pleasantly aromatic both in odour and taste, and very succulent. As it was highly prized at one time, those who lived near the coast collected it and sent it to their friends inland.

Gerans wore light shoes, without nails in the soles; a short jacket; and a sower's pouch slung round him, in which to put the gathered plants as they were plucked. He was not in the cheerful humour which was common to him. The samphire-picking he greatly enjoyed on former occasions, and he was wont to go forth singing to his dangerous pursuit. There was pleasure in hanging halfway down a cliff with the rolling blue-green sea curling and foaming underneath; and to feel the sun strike back from the rocks to which he clung; and to inhale at every inspiration an air that went down into his lungs as the vapour of the elixir of life. It was pleasant to be among the wheeling gulls, the kittiwakes with their scarlet beaks, the great cormorants with metallic

plumage, the gannets—the young black and white speckled, and the older white with blue-grey faces—the glossy black, scarlet-stockinged chuff: to have these birds wheeling and screaming around, and to invade their nests, and see their startled young, it was worth the risk of the descent. It was pleasant to be among the scented glassy-stalked samphire, and the pink dancing tufts of the thrift. On a bright day, nothing gave so great a sense of light, and sparkle, and buoyancy as a swing down the face of the sea cliffs after samphire. But this morning Gerans was not himself. It was his birthday, and Rose had forgotten to congratulate him on it. He was going forth on a perilous enterprise, and she had manifested no concern about it. He had expected every moment that morning from his waking that she would recollect what day it was, and would come smiling to him, put her arms round his neck, and wish him many happy returns of it. A very little love on her part would have made him forgive, if he could not wholly forget, her words of yesterday. But she gave no token of relenting. It was certain that she loved him no more. She had taken him, not knowing

her own mind; and now she had discovered, when too late to retract the step, that she did not either respect or love him. He had noticed, ever since his return from Truro with her, that she had become estranged from him bit by bit, but he had hoped that the gulf might close instead of widening farther. Now he knew that he must abandon this hope. He felt no bitterness towards her; he loved her as much as ever, possibly more. He had no suspicion of her heart having turned from him to another. He did not suppose that she was still the coquette, demanding, insisting on admiration, that she had been before. He knew that he had forfeited her love by his submission to his father and, he supposed, from deficiencies of manner, and mind, and culture, which she observed, but of which he was ignorant.

Dennis was not in a conversational mood either, and Anthony only talked with an effort. Consequently, the three walked along the cliffs in silence, only broken by remarks about spots where it was likely that samphire would be found, where it was observed growing in accessible spots, and where it was safe to descend.

After some little discussion, a place was

fixed upon where Gerans had gone down in former years. This was on the face of the cliff called Cardue Point, pierced by the Iron Gate.

The day was most beautiful. The sea was like a great sapphire, full of changing lights, and flashes, and shades of colour. The turf was thickly covered with thrift, running through every change of hue from pink to silvery white. Here and there a delicate little blue flax-flower shook in the wind—a flower so delicate, that when picked it shed its leaves at once.

'Here,' said Gerans, as he fastened the rope round his waist; 'I will go down the cliff in this place. I know that the samphire is abundant here, though one cannot see it from the top, as the edge slightly curves over.'

'Mind your footing, and the knot,' said Dennis. 'A fall here would end your happiness in this world.'

Gerans sighed. 'I do not know but that it would be as good a way out of one's troubles as any.'

'Troubles!' exclaimed Dennis, scornfully. 'You, a Gaverock, with everything you can wish for, have no right to speak about troubles.'

'But I have troubles,' answered Gerans,

laying his hand on his heart. 'There is a skeleton in every house.' He looked up at Dennis, and their eyes met; only for a moment —and Dennis knew by the sadness in those of Gerans that Gerans was aware that he was not loved by his wife. A wave of hot blood rolled through his veins, making sparks flash before his eyes, then darkness came over them. It passed, and he had regained his composure. But his heart beat faster, a triumphant feeling swelled in his breast. Rose did not love Gerans, never had loved him; she writhed in her marriage bonds. If she loved any one, it was himself, Dennis Penhalligan.

'Ready?' asked Gerans.

'Ready you are,' replied the other two, and Gerans crept over the edge, his white seed-pouch disappearing first, then his face, and last, the fingers clinging to the turf. As the fingers, first of one hand, then of the other, left their hold, the thought rushed through Penhalligan's brain, 'Now the man who stands between you and happiness is in your power. What does he care for life? He would thank you to let him fall.'

A crowbar had been driven into the turf,

and the rope looped round that. Anthony payed it out as it was wanted; Dennis knelt on one knee, with the heel of the other foot driven into the turf, grasping the cord with both hands, one before the other. At the farther end, the unseen end, was Gerans, creeping down the face of rock, holding to projections with his hands or resting his feet on ledges. At times the strain on the rope was great, at others not at all. The two young men were forced to be on the alert, as they could see nothing of their comrade, and were obliged to be ready to have the rope jerked violently at any moment.

Once while the strain was greatest, and they knew that Gerans was swinging almost with his entire weight over the spiked rocks and foaming surf, the temptation to let go came over Dennis with such power that he had great difficulty in conquering it. The temptation was not of the will, or of malice, to destroy Gerans; it was the numbing fear of letting go and so becoming his murderer, that almost took the power out of his muscles. The sensation was much the same as that which is felt when one stands on the verge of a precipice. One feels

impelled to cast oneself down, not from any wish to do so, but from an all but irresistible fascination, which the thought of falling exercises on the mind. Dennis saw Gerans dashing from his foothold, whirling down through the air to the sea below, and the sight of this descent, to his imagination, unnerved him ; his fingers trembled and began to relax, whilst a sweat of agony burst from his brow and lips and studded them with great drops.

Whether he could have mastered the weakness, had it continued, cannot be said. Fortunately, Gerans obtained foothold on a ledge, relaxing the cord, then shouted, and shook it, and Dennis and Anthony began to draw him up, he helping himself with his hands and knees and toes.

He brought up his pouch full of samphire. Then he cast himself on the turf to rest a few minutes, and Dennis was glad of the relief.

'I have seen plenty growing a little way to the right,' said Gerans. 'Quite a bed of it. I will go down there in a minute.'

'Give us more than a minute for rest,' said Dennis. 'Both Anthony Loveys and I have need of breathing time, besides, I have had

a sharp pull on the rope, and it has made my hands tender.'

'Tender or not, they must be tough enough to sustain me,' answered Gerans. 'My life depends on them.'

'Do not fear for me,' said Dennis, gravely. But though he spoke boldly he had lost confidence in his nerve.

'I am ready for you when you like,' said Anthony. 'My skin is like leather.'

The three walked along the verge to the spot indicated by Gerans. The excitement of the descent, and the herb-picking, had driven from him his despondency, and as he went over the edge his face was smiling and hopeful as usual.

'For God's sake be careful now,' were his last words. 'Don't go to sleep, Anthony. There is a tickle (difficult) bit where I cannot plant a foot.'

'The bar is well driven in,' said Anthony Loveys.

'Yes,' said Dennis, looking over his shoulder. 'But the bar is nought without the grip on the rope slewed about it. Hold hard.'

The two young men exerted their full

strength; with heels driven into the turf they were firm as rooted trees. The cord was given a turn about the bar, and the bar was driven into the ground slanting steeply away from the direction in which was the strain; but the soil on the surface of the rock was not of sufficient depth to allow of its being forced down to any considerable distance. It would have been quite insufficient alone to have supported the weight of a man. With the rope looped round it, it materially assisted in sustaining the burden. Very cautiously the young men let out length to allow of the descent of Gerans. He was hanging now quite free from the cliff over jagged points of slate and the waves, torn and tattered as they rushed over and in and out among the blades of rock. According to his estimate, he must descend sheer fifty feet before he reached the shelf on which the samphire grew in a green belt, rankly.

How much rope had been payed out, how long they had been slowly lowering Gerans, neither Dennis nor young Loveys knew exactly, when suddenly a white liver-spotted dog, limping, ran up, and jumped over the rope behind Penhalligan, who did not see it, drawing its

lame cold foot across the back of Anthony's hand.

Anthony, startled, and, in his surprise, forgetful of what he was about, let go his hold to wipe away the clammy moisture, like the track of a slug, left by the mongrel dog's foot on his hand.

Instantly the rope flew away, jerking the bar out of the ground, and throwing up the turf, rushing through the hands of Dennis. A cry was heard, whether that of Gerans or of a gull, neither knew, neither heeded. Dennis threw himself full length on the cord, gripping it with all the force he could concentrate into the muscles of his arms, but the weight and fall at the farther end drew him along the turf to the edge of the precipice. In another moment he would have been over as well as Gerans; but the end of the coil was fortunately round Loveys, and, as it ran out, caught him, and he cast himself, or was flung across the course of the pull, instead of in the line of it, like Dennis, and the rope was arrested by his weight and resistance.

Then Penhalligan retreated backwards, hand behind hand, till he was a safe distance from

the edge. He was quivering in all his muscles and sick at heart; he had seen over the cliff the spikes and razor-blades of slate far below waiting to cut and kill him. Slowly the two young men drew in the rope till Gerans was safely landed on the top. He was white and agitated.

'It was my fault,' said Anthony, when Gerans cast himself on the turf, speechless, beside Dennis, who also was unable to speak. 'I thought I heard a low bark behind me, and a moment after saw the flap of a coat in the wind, and just then a spotted dog like that of the pedlar at the Goose Fair ran over my hands, and took the power out of them, just as if I'd had a shock from a sea-nettle.'

'But for Penhalligan I would have been dashed to pieces,' said Gerans. 'Give me your hand, Dennis; I thank you for my life.'

The doctor held out his hands. They were covered with blood; the rope had flayed his palms in flying through them, and the backs and knuckles were cut and bleeding from the stones over which they had been drawn.

'Don't thank me. I cannot shake hands,' said Dennis, coldly. 'I saved my own life.'

Anthony Loveys looked about and behind him. 'I can't make it out at all,' he said. 'I see no one here, and no dog either. Yet, if it were the pedlar, he could not have left the cliff by this time.'

'Bah, Anthony!' said Gerans. 'It was a dream. You fell asleep over your work.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEER'S WELL.

GERANS returned to Towan with the samphire for Rose. He went in search of her at once, and found her in her own room. He was too agitated to observe her mood.

'Rose,' he said; 'as I began life on this day, I almost ended it. I have been nearer my end than I ever was on any former occasion. I owe my life to Dennis. Anthony let go the rope, and I was being whirled down to death, when Dennis arrested it, and saved me. He will not come in; he is washing his hands at the Deer's Well. He has torn and cut them. Take him some rag. I will go to my mother. I do not want her to know anything about it, and Anthony is below.'

Rose looked at him with anxiety, and trembled. He did not kiss her; he hurried away to his mother, afraid of Anthony Loveys

in his stupidity letting out the danger he had been in.

Rose got some pieces of soft old rag, and a bottle of Friar's balsam, and, without putting on her hat or bonnet, went out through the old deer paddock to the well. This well lay on one side of the house, in a depression, with old thorn trees growing about it, overarching and plaiting their branches together like clasped fingers across the spring. The well itself was built up of grey lichened stones, and had originally been gabled like that we have described at Welcombe, but many of the stones were out of place, and it was ruinous. Still, the trough that received the water was sound and free from fallen stones, and indeed from it most of the water used in the house was derived. As it was in a depression, those standing at the well were invisible from the house, the roofs of which and the chimney-tops could be seen at the well, but no window commanded the Deer's Well.

Rose hurried down the slope over the fresh and springy turf, sown thick with daisy and buttercup, and found Dennis on his knee at the spring, holding his hands in the water to

arrest the blood and cleanse earthy particles from the wounds.

She turned her face away as she held out the balsam and the linen. 'Do not let me see blood,' she said, 'or I shall faint. But tell me, are you really very—very much hurt?'

Dennis stood up, and taking the rags from her hands, sopped them in balsam and fastened them round his fingers where most cut and abraded.

'Nothing to signify,' he said. 'Perhaps now that I have been hurt myself, I shall have what I hitherto lacked, sympathy for sufferers.'

'And you saved Gerans's life! How I thank you.'

'I saved my own at the same time. He nearly dragged me over the edge of the cliff. I cannot fasten this kerchief round my hand; would you object to do it? You will see no blood. The stains that you see on the wrapper are those of balsam.'

He held out his right hand. The left was bound up. He had put the white strips over the palms and knuckles, but with the bound left hand he was unable to knot them. Rose took the ends, and drew the loose strips tighter.

'Do I hurt you?' she said, raising her blue eyes to his face.

'Yes, always. But I cherish my pain.' His dark orbs met hers, and she dropped her eyes hastily.

How pretty she was in her white dress, gathered rather high, according to our modern notions, below the bosom, and falling plain to a set of frills of the same material as the dress, at the bottom. About her neck was thrown a forget-me-not blue kerchief, tucked into her breast, where the gown was edged with a broad double frill, like that on the skirt. Her golden curly head was exposed to the full blaze of the sun, which seemed to revel in the tangle of burnished beautiful hairs, and produce flakes and glints of light and colour among them.

Dennis's pulses beat. She looked so young, so girlish, so slender and sweet—she could not be regarded as a married woman, with that childish, coquettish face, and those laughing blue eyes, and the little compressed cherry-red lips, that seemed made to laugh and kiss, and could not express a serious thought, or quiver with pain.

Her hands trembled, for she was nervous,

whilst tying the bandages. She felt that his eyes were on her head.

'It would have been well, perhaps,' said Dennis, 'if we had both gone over the edge together, Gerans and I, and so there had been at once an end of two broken lives.'

'Broken!' She glanced up surprised, caught his deep look again, and resumed her work on his hand, with her eyes on the rag.

'Broken and miserable,' he said.

'I know,' said Rose, 'that you have had many disappointments. I know that you have not been appreciated according to your merits, and that you are unhappy, because disappointed; but Gerans—why should you speak of him as having a broken life?'

'Because, where he looked for happiness he met with disappointment.'

Then the blood shot through every artery of Rose's body, and crimsoned her face and throat and temples. Her fresh lips tightened and lost their cherry redness. She misunderstood him. She thought he meant that Gerans had loved Loveday, but had been unable to marry her, perhaps because his father would not permit it. He had taken herself because

old Hender Gaverock had ordered him; but he could not draw his heart away from Loveday, therefore he was miserable, and his life broken.

Penhalligan, who watched her intently, saw the tumult in her soul, and misinterpreted it. He thought that in it he saw an acknowledgment that he was right. She did not love, she did not even care for Gerans, to whom she was fatally linked. What had been her first words on coming to him? Had she not spoken to him of himself, and only afterwards of Gerans? To his passion-distorted mind, such a small matter as this had its significance.

'Loveday——' began Rose, and then the words died away on her lips. She trembled. She let go the bandage, which was now tied. She did not look up, she clasped her hands before her, and watched the water that flowed away from the Deer's Well.

'Loveday,' said Dennis, after a pause, 'Loveday is going away. She leaves Nantsillan and me for a twelvemonth.'

'Loveday going!' exclaimed Rose in surprise, and with a leap of her heart in pleasure.

'Yes,' he answered. 'Loveday is going away

—directly. You will not see her again for a year.'

'But—why?—for what reason?'

'The Squire wishes it. He has extorted from her a promise that she will go.'

'But why?—tell me, why?'

'Squire Gaverock has his reasons. If he has not mentioned them to you, it is not for me to repeat them.'

Rose said no more. She stood, buried in thought, and now there was no laughter in her eyes, no dimples in her soft cheeks, little colour in them, and the merry lips were agitated with distress.

'The Squire thought it best that she should go. So do I.'

'And Gerans?'

'He was not consulted.'

She understood the reason of the banishment of Loveday; she could see all as clearly as though she had been told everything. The Squire had discovered, what was obvious to her, that Gerans was still attached to Dennis's sister; therefore for Loveday's sake, for the sake of Gerans, and of herself, Rose, he had advised that she should go. Then it was to be

hoped that, in her absence, Gerans would cease to think of her, and that his heart would incline to his wife.

It was unfortunate that Rose had not been told of the marriage to Constantine. Gerans had not confided it to her, because he did not feel justified in doing so against the wishes of Loveday, and when the old Squire heard of it, 'Not a word to Rose,' he said, 'or her wagging tongue will publish what I want to keep quiet. I know women too well to entrust them with secrets.'

Rose was hurt, and was incensed. The tears welled up into her eyes, and her bosom heaved fast; but she tried to conceal her emotion from Dennis, or, at least, to disguise the occasion of it.

'That is very hard upon you,' she said; 'what will you do without your sister, to keep house for you?'

'I have had harder things to bear than that,' said Dennis.

She was struggling with herself. She tried hard to control her agitation; but she was unaccustomed to self-restraint.

'When is Loveday going?' she asked,

with a fluttering mouth, and a voice full of tears.

'In two days—at latest. To-morrow if she can. She has already written to her cousin at Exeter to expect her.'

She put up her hands to her mouth, and pressed her knuckles to her lips to arrest their quivering.

'There is that matter of the piano,' said Dennis. 'Loveday undertook to repay the sum you advanced upon it. She will be better able to do so now than if she remained here. She will look out for a situation in which she can earn some money, a situation suitable for a gentlewoman,' he explained.

'Say nothing about that,' entreated Rose, putting out her hand to wave away all mention of money. Then a great sob burst from her bosom, and she gave way to a flood of tears. 'I am so unhappy! so unhappy!' she gasped, to excuse this outbreak.

Instantly Dennis seized her hand, drew her to him, clasped her in his arms, and kissed her lips and wet cheeks, fiercely, passionately.

Rose recovered herself, and strove with him, crying, 'Let go! Leave me!' flaming in her

cheeks, and drawing back. Then both heard a cry. Dennis relaxed his grasp of her, and both looking up, saw Loveday standing on the path that descended to the well, standing as one frozen.

Rose shook herself free and fled past Loveday, without a word, and ran into the house, to her own room, and locked herself in. Dennis turned deadly white. 'Peeping, prying again!' he said; 'I shall count the hours till I see your back.' As he went by he thrust her from him roughly, with a look so angry, so charged with dislike, that Loveday covered her face and moaned. She was too deeply wounded and shamed to weep.

Loveday had come to Towan to see Mrs. Gaverock and to break to her as gently as she could her approaching departure. She knew that the old lady would feel the loss of her very keenly, and she was afraid of her hearing that she was going from other lips than her own. Whilst she was at Towan, Gerans told her that her brother had cut his hands badly, and was washing them at the Deer's Well. Then, anxious to know the extent of his hurt, she ran to find him, and arrived at the moment

when he had clasped Rose to his heart and was kissing her.

It was some time before she could sufficiently recover herself to walk home, and then a numbness was on her brain, and a chill at her heart, such as no trouble had brought heretofore.

When Rose was alone in her room, she threw herself in a chair by her bed, laid her hands folded on the bed and her face on her hands, and wept long and convulsively. She hardly knew what had happened, her brain was in a whirl. But after an hour, when the storm of her grief and shame had spent itself, she was able to recollect all that had passed. She poured water into her basin, and washed her cheeks and lips, and rubbed them with the towel till they smarted, to wipe away the taint of Dennis's kisses. What must he think of her, to dare thus to touch her! What a low, vile opinion he must have formed of her! Her anger boiled up. She—a married woman—to be thus insulted! The sense of humiliation burnt like fire in her heart, and called forth a new and scalding rain. Gladly would she have sacrificed all her jewelry—her pretty coral

necklet, her Roman pearl earrings, if only thereby she could undo what had been done. Never before had she been treated with such indignity, and she hated the man who had offended her. Should she tell Gerans? He would be obliged to revenge the wrong done her. She would do so. She would get the Squire to turn Dennis out of the cottage as well as Loveday. Then she thought that it was no wonder she was shown disrespect when she received scant courtesy from her own husband. Whose fault was it that she had met with this outrage? Whose but Gerans's, who had shown Dennis and every one that he would not fight her battles? Whose but Gerans's, who allowed it to be seen by all that he had no love for his wife? Whose but Gerans's, who was always deserting her to run down to Nantsillan courting the society of his old flame, Loveday?

Then the current of her indignation turned against the latter, for having witnessed her humiliation. If only the insolence of Dennis had been offered with no eye-witness to tell tales, it would have mattered less; but that there should have been a witness!—and that

witness, Loveday! A fresh flood of tears ran over her burning cheeks.

Would she tell Gerans of the insolence of Dennis? No—she would not. He had not the manhood in him to protect her; why—in such a matter as the riding of Phœbus, he had deserted her, and left her vindication to Dennis. Dennis at least had courage; and if he loved her, was proud to champion her. Dennis Penhalligan had acted towards her very wrongly, but then—he loved her so intensely! As for Gerans, he did not love her at all. Dennis had forgotten himself, and he would regret it. Those regrets should be his punishment. He would be ashamed to meet her again. How he admired, worshipped, loved her! She thought of the night of the Goose Fair, and of the declaration of his despair in the snow! His life had indeed been broken by the loss of her. As for Gerans, he took everything easily. Nothing disconcerted him for long.

When Rose descended to the hall and to the parlour, she seated herself in the shade. She had not the courage to meet the eyes of her mother-in-law or of her husband. She thought they must certainly read in her face

what had happened. Her cheeks burnt, and her eyes were cast down, and she was very silent. But neither Mrs. Gaverock nor Gerans observed her condition; and presently she reasoned with herself that she had no occasion for being ashamed, and sitting like a penitent; she had not encouraged Dennis to kiss her. When he put his arm round her, she had bidden him let go, and had striven to thrust him off. Why should she feel compunction because a man no way related to her had misconducted himself?

'Rose!' said Mrs. Gaverock; and at the call Rose started from the study into which she had fallen. 'Rose! are you aware that this is Gerans's twenty-third birthday?'

'It had escaped me,' answered Rose.

'Then—you have not wished him well?'

'I wish you,' said Rose, turning to her husband, 'many happy returns of the day.' She spoke without warmth.

'Was that spoken in earnest or in sarcasm?' asked Gerans, fixing his eyes on her face entreatingly, but doubtfully.

'Take it which way you like,' she answered with a shrug of her shoulders, stood up, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ANTHONY'S WOOING

LOVEDAY returned to Nantsillan, hardly able to think, so stupefied was she by what she had seen. But she pressed her hands to her bosom, and repeated to herself, 'I am glad I am going!'

She had loved her brother so dearly, believed in him so stoutly, encouraged him so bravely, brightened his cloudy moods with so sanguine a trust in Providence, that what had occurred shook her soul to its depths. How could she hope any more that Heaven would smile upon her brother's efforts, and grant a turn for the better in his prospects, when he harboured a passion that was sinful? She had not believed him to be bad; she had trusted in his integrity. Now that trust was shaken down. She was as despondent as Dennis, for the grounds of her confidence and hope were destroyed.

She saw little of him that evening and next day. He treated her with coldness, and held her at a distance. She would like to speak to him of what lay in her heart, but he allowed her no opportunity. He kept away from the house, as fearing she might speak; and she, in her mind, was doubtful whether a word from her would avail, whether it might not aggravate him to speak cruel words to her which would mortally wound her loving soul.

She had much to occupy her, and this was as well; it took off her thoughts from what had happened. She had to pack her clothes, and instruct little Ruth what to do for her master, and to find a woman who could come in by day and char. Dennis left the whole arrangement and provision with her. He acted as though the house could go on as well without her as with her presence.

In the morning of the day following—that is, on Tuesday—Squire Gaverock looked in.

'Good-morning, Loveday,' he said. 'I hear you are going on Wednesday by the coach from Wadebridge. That is right. When you've a mind to do a thing, do it at once, as the cormorant said when he swallowed a herring

whole. Gerans shall drive you over to meet the coach. I reckon your brother's gig won't hold your box, and he will be wanted to-morrow. I hear that Reuben Rouse is very ill with inflammation, and Penhalligan can't be spared a whole day to take you into Wade-bridge.'

'Thank you, Mr. Gaverock. I shall be much obliged.'

'Golly! don't thank me. I pack you off, and so must see you despatched. I've come about that, and'—he shuffled his feet—'I suppose you ain't too proud to accept a present from me. Mind you, it implies no recognition. I must have time to digest what has been told me, and make up my mind about it. A present commits me to nothing, you understand.' He crushed a couple of five-pound notes into her hand, then hastily went on, to interrupt her as she began to speak: 'Gerans had a near shave of having every bone in his body broken yesterday. I heard all about it from Anthony. Your brother was nigh pulled over the cliffs as well, for he clung on till Anthony was able to lay hold. Well! a man's life on this coast, what with winds and waves and rocks, is full

of venture. But that makes life the more enjoyable.' Then suddenly, without giving Loveday time to speak, he strode out of the door, and climbed the steep path through the glen to Towan moor.

The old Squire had spoken with more gentleness than was usual for him, and there had been a kindly look in his rough face. He was thought to be a close and hard man about money. For him to give her ten pounds proved that she had made some way into his regard. To part with it must have cost him a struggle.

Squire Gaverock had not been gone long before the farmer's wife who supplied the Penhalligans with butter and milk appeared. She was a rosy-faced, dark-haired, stout woman named Josse—Jemima Josse.

'Loramussy, Miss Loveday,' exclaimed she, coming in, 'what be this us ha' heared? You're a going to leave us! Loramussy, who ever'd ha' believed it!'

'Yes, Mrs. Josse,' said Loveday. 'I am going away for a while, but only for a while.'

'Folks do talk,' observed Mrs. Josse. 'There be no more stopping 'em than there be

a-stopping the waves from roaring and the sand from shifting. Uncle Zackey were up to our place about an hour ago, and says he, "Sure Miss Loveday be agoing all along of your bill for eggs and butter and the side o' bacon you had back along to Cursemass." "No, never!" says I, but I thought I'd just run down and see. If 't be, and it'll keep you, Miss, we'll halve the bacon, and let the eggs and the milk stand over to better times.'

'No, Mrs. Josse; I assure you it is not that. I have the money all ready for you.'

'Well now, I be glad o' that,' said the woman. 'How folks can have the face to talk! I've got my little bill in my pocket, made up to the end o' the month; that's the half year, tacked on to the Cursemass account. If you'd not mind settling all to once, as you can. But if you can't, well, I'll say naught about it. It shall stand over. Still, if once you do get to a great town, there's no knowing what attractions the beautiful things in the shop winders may have on you, and you'll be spending the money.'

'I will pay you in full, Mrs. Josse.'

'And,' said Jemima, 'I've made so bold,

Miss, as to bring you down a pound o' cream, real Cornish cream, wi' a round o' brown bread at top to keep it sweet, and make it travel beautiful. Us have heard you're going to Exeter, and my old man and me, us have heard that they Devonshire folk do go and brag as they can make cream, and calls it Devonshire cream. How folks can be so wicked and set up to be Christians, beats me. But the world is going to destruction. It's all prophesied. You'll accept the pound o' Cornish cream, will you not, Miss, and let some of the folks in Devon look at it, and taste it, and may they never make so bould as to call theer own rubbish cream again.'

When Jemima Josse was gone, an old woman, bent with rheumatism, arrived, leaning on a stick.

'Well, Mary Tregothnan,' said Loveday. 'Come to see me before I leave?'

'O Lord! Miss, whatever shall us do without y'?' asked old Mary. 'There be that three yards o' red flannel you was so very good as to give me last winter. I rolled 'n round my body and sewed it on, and her do give me a power of comfort. Whenever I goes

to church, and whenever I sez my prayers, I be wearing thicky (that) flannel, and the Lord sees it, and I show 'n how good Miss Loveday were to a poor body with rheumaticks in her bones. But, Miss, I 'sure you I've never had thicky bit o' flannel off to this day, and never will till her drops off.'

'Oh, Mary, surely——'

'My dear young leddy, if you knew the comfort her be to my back! But I reckon you're agoing away, and mebbe won't be here next winter. I'm that bould, Miss, to bring you a bottle of ketchup I made last fall. Her's cruel good, and her'll keep a terrible long time.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you so much, Mary!'

'My dear! if the flannel should go all into holes about me, afore you come back, it will be a pity. I reckon you'll be too far away to think on me next winter when it be cold and I be took wi' the pains in my back, and the flannel be wore as thin as muslin. But, sure, whenever you tase the ketchup you'll mind old Mary Tregothnan and her bad back.'

The next to come was little Ruth.

'Please, Miss,' said the small maid, holding

a pair of large mottled blue, green, and black gull's eggs, 'my brother Jim have been scrambling about the cliffs. He thought you'd like to have some gull's eggs to show to the foreigners inland in Devonshire. I reckon they've never seen a gull's egg. But this be a wrong time for getting them good, as all the little 'uns be hatched out, so he were forced to get two as was addled. If you'll shake them, Miss, you'll hear how the trades washes about inside. Jim sed they'd better not be blowed—they wouldn't travel so well. But when you're settled, Miss, please to make a hole at both ends, and put your mouth to one, and blow as hard as ever you can, and all the inerds will come out fast enough. And Jim sed as how you was to be very kearful wi' them and fold them up in your best silk gown, in the middle of the box, for if they wos to break—there'd be a smeech!' (smell).

'Oh, thank you, Ruth, and thank Jim so much for me!'

'And, please, Miss, Jim sed I wos to tell you that if you heard of a sitivation with a nobleman as gamekeeper, he'd take it very kind if you'd put in a word for him.'

The next to come was the captain of a slate quarry in the parish, with a pot of honey in one hand, and a slab of slate under the other arm.

'Why, Miss Penhalligan!' said Captain Davie, 'this is a disaster indeed, that us is to lose you. I don't believe as there be nobody in the parish will be missed more than you. Not that folks sees so much of you. You've your duties at home, but when you do visit 'em, they vallies your visits as those of angels. As for my wife, her be that took on, her have so thought about your going that it have gived her the collick, and her can't come up and see yourself as her'd have liked. So I've a-come instead. I do assure you, Miss, us have cried in the night thinking you was going.' He began to sniff and wipe his eyes and nose. 'And now I've made that daring bold to bring you up a little present of a pot of honey. It come from a virgin swarm, took last fall, and beautiful and clear now as when it was runned out of the comb. Lord! sure I've shooked the pot in coming, and the cover be a bit busted, and the honey be running down the side. But, Miss, the pot will travel well enough if you put

it at the bottom of your box under the clothes, and write on the cover of your box, in big letters, "This side uppermost."'

'How good, how kind you are!' exclaimed Loveday, with the tears in her eyes also.

'And, Miss,' continued the captain, producing the great slate and placing that also on the table, 'if I might be so bold as to ask a favour, would you mind taking this here sample of our slate with you, and if when you're about travelling you hear any talk of slate, would you kindly show this sample, and ring it, and let folks see the colour, and recommend my quarry.'

So Loveday was left with a pot of cream in dog days, sure to become sour; a medicine bottle of ketchup, stopped with an old castor-oil cork that did not fit, and was so oily that it would not keep in; two addled gull's eggs, a pot of honey running over the side, and a slab of slate, to add to the rest of her property; and she was too sensible of the kindness shown her, and too conscientious, to leave any of these articles behind.

The affection and generosity of the good people touched her. She saw nothing of the

selfishness that spiced their kindness; she saw the kindness alone. That the Squire had given her ten pounds to help to be rid of her, and that the farmer's wife had come down to get her money if she could, and that Mary wanted another three yards of flannel, and Jim a good situation, and Captain Davie an extension of custom, through her, was either unnoticed by her, or was not regarded as in any way derogating from the kindness of the people in making their presents.

But these were not the only visitors Loveday had, interrupting her at her packing.

Whilst she was engaged, in the afternoon, in securing the honey with a cover of oiled paper, she was called away by the arrival of Madam Loveys and Anthony, her son.

'Why!' exclaimed the lady, looking round her, and taking observations of everything in the room, 'what is the meaning of this, Miss Penhalligan? Going to leave us! The news only reached me this morning. Cook told me when I was ordering dinner. I prevented Anthony going out boating this afternoon, and have made him put on his best clothes, and have brought him over.'

What Anthony had to do with this was not clear.

'Why are you going?' asked Madam. 'No one goes away without a reason. What is your reason?'

'There are several reasons,' said Loveday. 'One is that I want to relieve my brother from a little expense, and I intend to earn some money if I may with my services.'

'Any situation in view?'

'No, Mrs. Loveys, none.'

'Umph!'

Then from young Anthony, 'Go out, Toby! Get out, you rascal!' addressed to a terrier who had come in and was jumping about him.

'The dog will do no harm here,' said Loveday. 'Let me get him a bit of biscuit.'

'No, please,' said Madam. 'We have rules. The dogs are not fed in the house, and the dog ought not to come in. Turn out Toby, Anthony.'

Then ensued a series of efforts on the part of Anthony to get the dog out. Toby went under the table, and would not leave, though his master adjured him. At last young Anthony

slipped out at the door, and kneeling down began to scratch with his fingers on the step. Toby, thinking the noise proceeded from rats, went out to ascertain. But directly he saw his master, he darted back into the hall again.

'Never mind the dog,' said Loveday.

'But I do mind, Miss Penhalligan,' said Madam. 'Rules are rules. If it were not that this floor is slated, Toby would not have dared to intrude. How are you going?'

'The Squire has very kindly offered to have me driven to Wadebridge, where I shall take the coach to Bodmin, and from Bodmin, by Launceston, I shall go by coach to Exeter.'

'Umph!'

'I hope Mr. Loveys is well?'

'Oh, nothing ever ails him but gout. I think, Anthony, if Miss Penhalligan will allow you to seduce Toby into the kitchen, you might shut him in there, and run round, and in again by the front of the house.'

This manœuvre was executed, but with only partial success. The dog was, indeed, beguiled into the kitchen, but he created such terror in Ruth, by jumping up on her and snapping at her nose and the flaps of her white cap, that

Mrs. Loveys was obliged to open the door and call Toby back into the hall. He at once returned, and began smelling round the room for rats.

'Where are you going to in Exeter?' asked Madam, reseating herself.

'I am going to my cousin till I hear of something.'

'How long will that be?'

Loveday could not tell.

'Have you had this idea long in your head? Really, Anthony, that Toby is unendurable. What is he about now?'

'There are rats there, I reckon,' said Anthony. The terrier was on one side scratching furiously in the corner, uttering sharp barks.

'I think he smells the cake in my cupboard,' said Loveday, rising; 'he shall be given a bit.'

'Upon my word, Anthony, I will not bring you out with me again if you cannot keep Toby in order.' Mrs. Loveys stood up hastily and arrested Loveday. 'No, Miss Penhalligan, not in the room. Toby! Toby! Give me the piece of saffron cake, Miss Penhalligan. I will decoy the dog out of the house, and keep him there a while, and leave Anthony.'

Then Madam Loveys walked in a stately manner out of the door, holding up a piece of yellow plumcake, whilst Toby danced, and jumped, and barked round her, and tumbled over, picked himself up, and jumped again.

Loveday reseated herself.

'Toby is but a pup,' said Anthony.

Then ensued a silence. Loveday looked to the door, expecting the return of Mrs. Loveys.

'Mamma is walking about with Toby,' explained Anthony. 'She won't be in for some minutes.'

Another silence ensued.

'Are you fond of dogs?' asked young Loveys.

'I never had one to care for,' answered the young lady. 'Would you like a piece of cake? Very plain.'

'Thank you,' answered Anthony, 'I can always eat cake.'

'Perhaps you would like a little cream on top of it,' said Loveday. 'Mrs. Josse has been so very kind as to send me a pot, but I really do not think it will keep till I reach Exeter. Let me find you a spoon and a plate.'

'Thank you,' answered Anthony. 'Plum cake is terrible good with cream.'

Then ensued another pause, of long duration, during which young Loveys heaped the clotted cream on his cake as thickly as it would stand, and conveyed it to his mouth, not, however, without dropping some on the floor, which he covered with his foot.

'I hope you find it good,' said Loveday.

'Terrible,' answered Anthony, and helped himself to more.

Then Madam Loveys was visible, passing the window and looking in. Also Toby came to the door, stood on the threshold, looked at Anthony and at Loveday, shook his ears, and went back to Madam. At the sight of the dog young Loveys concealed the cake and cream, lest Toby should exact a share.

'Toby! how are they getting on?' asked Madam Loveys without, quite audibly to those within.

Young Anthony grew red, pushed the cream from him, and said, 'Don't you eat any?'

'Not now, thank you,' answered Loveday.

A long pause. Anthony coughed, and crossed his feet. Then coughed again, disunited

his feet, and recrossed them, the foot below on the former occasion being placed uppermost on this.

Mrs. Loveys again swept past the door and window. Anthony, as though stimulated by the sight of his mother to say something, remarked, 'Toby's tail is cut too short to be beautiful, I think, and his ears ain't cut at all. They don't congrue.'

'I don't see why dogs' tails should be cut,' said Loveday.

'Oh, of course, they must be cut.'

'Why?'

'Because, you see, they always are cut.'

'Always?'

'Depends, of course, on the sort of dog.'

Madam Loveys now stood in the doorway; she said, 'Well, Anthony?' in a tone of query.

'Well, mother,' answered the young man in a tone of assurance.

Then Madam Loveys resumed her walk.

'Will not Mrs. Loveys come in and sit down?' asked Loveday.

'Oh no, not yet, till we've settled about it.'

'Settled about what?' inquired the young lady, somewhat puzzled.

'Oh, you know. All that sort of thing. You know.'

A pause. Then Anthony got up, went to the door, and called his mother. She appeared at once with Toby. The dog dashed in, became at once aware that some eating had been going on, span about the floor after crumbs, lapped up the spilt cream, and insisted on more, jumping about the table, and sniffing and yelping.

'All right, mother,' said Anthony. 'She understands.'

'Glad to hear it. So he has asked you?' said Mrs. Loveys, addressing Loveday.

'I beg your pardon,' said the latter, colouring. 'Mr. Anthony has asked me nothing. I asked him why dogs' tails were cut, and have not yet had a satisfactory answer.'

'There, Anthony, you never can be trusted. Sit down Miss Penhalligan.' Loveday had risen when Mrs. Loveys entered. 'I must speak for him. Anthony will have plenty to live on, but he must have a wife with a head on her shoulders, and I have fixed on you. You are so excellent, and so kind and generally beloved, so prudent and sensible, that I think you will do

very well for Anthony; his father and I have the greatest pleasure in saying so.'

Loveday was too astonished to speak.

'Anthony is not a bad fellow. He is dough to be moulded. A woman with wits will make something out of him.'

'My dear Mrs. Loveys,' said Loveday, greatly moved, 'this is kind and flattering of you. I had not an idea. It is so unexpected. I had not the remotest——'

'There is no immediate hurry,' said Madam. 'Turn the proposal over. Good Heavens! Piff! piff!'

Toby had leaped on the table to get at the cream and cake, and had upset the gull's eggs on the slate floor. An immediate retreat into the open air was necessary.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FAREWELL.

THE last to emerge from the cottage was Anthony, who said, with a sense of pride, 'I have put the cream out of the reach of the dog. Toby is very fond of cream.'

'My dear Miss Penhalligan,' said Mrs. Loveys, standing on the doorstep, 'we are quite of one mind in this. Nothing could be better for Anthony. Though he is my son, I say it, he is a good boy. There is no vice in him, and his constitution is sound. He has had measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough, and ringworm, and got through and out of all bravely. He has been vaccinated, and it took beautifully. What more could you desire? We do not wish to hasten you to a decision, but desire that you will bear our proposal in mind, mark and inwardly digest it.'

'Mrs. Loveys, Mr. Anthony!' said Love-

day, looking from one to the other; 'you must not think me ungrateful for the great honour and kindness you have shown me, but——'

'There can be no buts in the case,' said Mrs. Loveys; 'it commends itself to my mind as admirable, and Mr. Loveys quite agrees with me. As Anthony is so flexible, it is most important that he should be put in the hands of a woman with a character and will of her own. He has, or will have, quite sufficient means. After his father's death he will be well off. We have put our heads together, and weighed a good many girls one against another, and we have decided on you for our daughter-in-law.'

'I cannot—I cannot, indeed,' protested Loveday, tearfully. 'You are very good. I shall never forget your goodness, but—it cannot, indeed, be.'

'Hoity toity!' exclaimed Madam. 'No can'ts and shan'ts with me. What I have settled shall be. I was a Gaverock, and though I have changed my name by marrying Loveys, still, bone and muscle and fat and flesh, I am Gaverock still. Come Anthony! Come Toby! Pah! I have the smell of those addled eggs in my nose still.'

'My dear Mrs. Loveys——'

'My dear Miss Penhalligan, leave everything to me. I am a manager. There—we will say no more about this matter at present. Let it stand to settle. It will do Anthony good to have the cloud hang over him, ready to fall when we summon it to descend. Stay, my dear; I saw an advertisement in "The Light of the West" that may suit you. I will send it to Towan to-night, and you shall have it in the morning. One of the Towan maidens is at our house, and she will carry it back.'

'Oh, Mrs. Loveys, dear, kind Mrs. Loveys! I cannot express to you all—do not think me unfeeling, ungrateful. I will write to you from Exeter.'

'Very well, do so. Let us hear of your safe arrival and prospects. I will put a pencil mark against the advertisement. It may or it may not suit you. It may be already filled, or it may be still vacant. Come along, Anthony! come along, Toby! Anthony, you awkward fellow, are you going away without saying good-bye to Miss Penhalligan, whom you may not see for many months? Good-bye, Miss Loveday; you have my best wishes, and—oh!

I must not forget—here is a little brooch I have brought you, rather pretty, of spiral gold work, with an enamel view of the Staubach in the middle—a scene in the Alps. You will keep it as a remembrancer of me; and when you look at that you will think of my proposal for Anthony. Now then, Toby! Come along, Anthony!'

When the Loveys' party was gone, Loveday sat for a few minutes in the unfurnished parlour, whilst little Ruth wiped up the mess made by the broken eggs.

Poor Ruth was sore distressed at their 'going scatt' on the floor; and Loveday was obliged to simulate great disappointment as well, and to beg that she might be given two more gull's eggs next spring, when they would be fresh, not addled.

Loveday was obliged to sit quiet for a while to review the proposal made to her. She could not accept it.

It was very kind of Mrs. Loveys, she thought; she had not conceived the smallest ambition in that direction. Were she to become Mrs. Anthony, she would be in a position of considerable social advantage—she would have

an excellent home and handsome fortune to dispose of; that it would assist her brother greatly she was also aware, but, notwithstanding all the advantages, it was a proposal she could not entertain. She shook her head. No, it was as she had told Mrs Loveys, a thing that could not be. She resolved not to say anything about it to Dennis; indeed, not to any one. If the Loveys liked to speak about it, they might; but she resolved to write from Exeter to tell Mrs. Loveys that she refused the offer definitely. It would be easier to write than to speak her refusal. It would be more likely to be taken as final when written.

Loveday again thought of the kindness of all who had come to see her that day, and again forgot that every one of her visitors had come, not only to give, but also to take.

She could not allow herself much time for her thoughts. She had too much to do. She had promised Mrs. Gaverock to run up in the afternoon and say good-bye to her. The afternoon was wearing on. She put on her bonnet and took her way to Towan. She must also part with Rose, and she doubted how to do so after yesterday. In her sweet, innocent heart,

she could not believe that Rose had given Dennis any encouragement; she was sure that the kisses had been taken by violence. She felt that Rose must be full of indignation against Dennis, and she herself felt that, as the sister of the man who had offered the insult, some of the anger of the injured woman must overflow upon her. Knowing what she did, having seen the insult offered, and knowing also that Rose knew her to have witnessed it, the meeting between them must be awkward, and their conduct towards each other restrained; indeed, Loveday told herself that she would not venture to look up and meet Rose's eye. That incident of yesterday had covered Loveday with humiliation and stained her brow with shame.

The parting of Mrs. Gaverock with Loveday was tender; the old lady had, however, the great consolation of hope that on Loveday's return it would be as her acknowledged daughter-in-law. She had not much confidence in her own influence with Hender Gaverock, but she could do something. She saw, moreover, that the old Squire was becoming daily more irritated against Rose, who was insubordinate, and who was unwilling or incapable of

taking the management of 'the maidens,' whose turbulence, thoughtlessness, and neglect were as vexatious to the old man now that Rose was at the head of the house as when she was away on her honeymoon. Rose had the key of the store-room, but forgot to give out supplies, and went for a ride on Phœbus with the key in her pocket. The Squire discovered that 'the maidens' were gravitating one and all to the stables, to laugh and romp with the groom and coachman, and that, accordingly, the men did their work imperfectly. The bread was underbaked, the potatoes were boiled without salt, the beds were made with a strip of blanket to tease the feet when thrust to the bottom, the coal-cellar was left unlocked, and tracks of dropped fragments indicated the road to all the neighbouring cottages except Nantsillan. Now and then old Gaverock, with exhausted patience, rushed in among 'the maidens' and gave them all notice to quit, scaring and scattering them, squalling and chattering, as a paper kite sent up over a rookery scares and scatters the clamorous rooks. But no improvement was effected by his interference; either the same maidens came back on their own

terms, or raw, ignorant hands were imported, who smashed the crockery, stood on one foot with their hands in their pockets when addressed by their mistress, and sent in the plates and tumblers smeared and thumbed. Occasionally, before her marriage, Rose had interfered, and had spasmodically made herself useful; but she did nothing well for long, she tired rapidly of self-imposed tasks, and when the tasks became duties she was reluctant to acknowledge them as such. Mrs. Gaverock foresaw that, before the twelvemonth was out, the Squire would send for Loveday, acknowledge her as a Gaverock, and make her his housekeeper. She was so confident of this that she smiled through her tears as she bade Loveday good-bye, and threw her gold chain round her neck, and bade her keep her pretty gold watch as a remembrance of Towan.

Rose was not in the parlour with her mother-in-law, but as Loveday left she saw her in the hall. With downcast eyes the latter approached Rose, and said, 'Good-bye, I am off to-morrow, and shall not see you again for a twelvemonth.'

'I am sure you will have a very pleasant

drive to Wadebridge to-morrow,' said Rose, with sarcasm in her tone. She had been told that Gerans was to take Loveday to the coach. Loveday raised her timid eyes with surprise, and dropped them again.

'I hope you will have a satisfactory absence,' said Rose, holding out her hand, and touching that of Loveday with the tips of her fingers. 'You have my best wishes.' With a cold, distant bow she left the room.

Miss Penhalligan, hurt, though she had not expected cordiality, walked back to Nantsillan more sad at heart than she had been before that day. She found Dennis returned. He asked where she had been, and she told him she had said farewell to Mrs. Gaverock and Rose at Towan. He said nothing more than that he was going out again to see Reuben Rouse.

When Loveday had left, Rose composed her face and went into the parlour to her mother-in-law.

'My dear,' said Mrs. Gaverock, 'I hear a noise from the kitchen; it penetrates even here, though there is a six-foot stone wall between. The sound is that of the maidens talking together. I suspect they are all chat-

tering, whereas Mary ought to be ironing in the laundry, and Anne milking in the cowhouse, and Susan drawing down the blinds upstairs, and Betty getting the tea-things ready, and Priscilla washing up in the back kitchen, and Genefer preparing the pie for supper or peeling the potatoes. Would you kindly look into the kitchen. Hark! I hear men's voices. I think that possibly the gardener, and the coachman, and the stable-boy, and one or two of the labourers may be there as well.'

Rose went out, and for a minute there was a lull in the buzz of voices that made its way even through a six-foot wall. Directly Rose left the kitchen it recommenced louder than ever.

'Yes,' said she, returning to Mrs. Gaverock, 'the men were there, drinking cyder and eating hunches of currant cake. They had come for their milk, they said. It is my belief that they are given fresh milk instead of scalded.'

'Very likely,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'I wish, Rose, you would look after matters a little more. I cannot; I did it when I was able. I would do it now, if I could.'

'I was not brought up to it,' answered

Rose; 'my father had a housekeeper, and I am ignorant of the smallest matters of housekeeping.'

'That is unfortunate; someone must take the management of an establishment such as this.'

'Besides,' said Rose, 'I don't like it.'

'We cannot always do what we like. We have duties to perform, as well as pleasures to distract us.'

'I do not see it. We are rich enough to have a woman here who can look after the maids and serve out stores.'

'My dear,' said Mrs. Gaverock, confidentially, 'I am in hopes of getting our Loveday here eventually, in the house, and then she shall have the keys and the control of everything. That is my scheme.'

Rose flushed angrily.

'Indeed! Set her over me; take from me my proper authority! Let her plant her feet on my neck!'

'My dear,' exclaimed Mrs. Gaverock, 'I do not understand you. Just now you said that you wanted a person here to relieve you of irksome obligations.'

'A hired servant, yes. I won't have Loveday in the house; if she comes, I shall leave it.'

Mrs. Gaverock looked at her out of her faded eyes with astonishment.

'You are incomprehensible to me, Rose; there is not a more suitable person than Loveday. I thought you were devoted to her.'

'I do not want to have her installed here in a position of authority over me.'

'She would not be in authority.'

'Yes, she would. If I wanted squab pie some day, she would answer, "Can't have it, I have ordered neck of mutton." I do not like neck. I never did like it. Besides, there are other reasons.'

'What?'

Rose was silent.

'Come here, and sit by me on the sofa,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'You are one of the family. There is no reason why you should be kept in the dark any longer. You shall be told all.'

Then Mrs. Gaverock confided to Rose the story of Constantine's secret marriage to Loveday.

'My husband,' she went on, 'knew nothing about it till last Sunday, and then he was very

angry. He has ordered Loveday to go away, whilst he makes up his mind whether to recognise her as a Gaverock or not.'

Rose hung her head, and covered her face with both her hands. She was ashamed of her jealousy. Now she understood why Gerans had made so much of Loveday; why Loveday deserved much attention. Now she comprehended the force of Loveday's words that evening that she had been with her at Nantsillan, when she had said, 'Gerans is nothing, can be nothing more to me, than a kind and trusted brother.'

Loveday was her sister-in-law, a cruelly injured sister-in-law, denied recognition by the old tyrant Squire, when she had a right to exact it. She had been unfairly treated by Constantine. Why had not Gerans stood up for her? Rose answered herself indignantly, 'Because he is a coward, he feared his father.' Then in her impetuosity, acting on the sudden revulsion in her feelings, inconsiderate in this, as in all things, conscious only that she had not parted from Loveday with the affection that was her due, regardless whether it were well for her, after the event of yesterday, to go to

the house of Dennis Penhalligan, she threw on her bonnet and shawl, and ran down to Nantsillan, sprung into the hall, and cast her arms round Loveday, crying and laughing and kissing her and calling her by every available endearing term.

'Oh, Loveday, dear Loveday, you must forgive me if I was cold to you just now. The—the servants were bothering me. I wish you would come and take the management out of my hands.'

She was ashamed to admit her jealousy, so she gave a false excuse.

'I thought, I thought,' said Loveday, timidly, speaking in a tremulous, low tone, 'that you were angry with me because——' she hesitated, caught her breath, as her heart fluttered, 'because of what my brother did, because he so forgot himself yesterday. Oh, dear Rose, do forgive him! If you love me at all, do forgive and forget this offence.'

'I took the rags to the well because my husband told me to do so,' explained Rose. 'He said that Mr. Penhalligan had torn his hands badly, and that they were bleeding.'

'Forgive him this once, Rose,' pleaded

Loveday, earnestly. 'Tell no one of his impertinence, and he will, I trust, never forget himself again. It is, I dare say, hard for you to pardon him. I can understand your indignation, but great excuse is to be made for Dennis. I may tell you now, though my mouth was sealed before, that he loved you, very, very much. I think he cared more for you than for any person or anything the world contains. My brother has a very strong nature, and he feels very strongly. He has had to put great control on himself; and then, when he was excited, and fevered, just recovered from the brink of destruction, thrilled in every nerve, and fired with the pain of his wounds, you will allow there is some little excuse to be made for him. I am sure—I am sure Dennis will never so far forget himself as to commit such an indiscretion again. You will—you will forgive?'

'Very well, Loveday,' answered Rose, with great magnanimity, 'as *you* ask it I will pass this affront over. I can refuse you nothing. Otherwise——' She did not finish her sentence, but assumed an indignant and injured look.

Dennis Penhalligan saw Rose leave the

cottage. She did not see him. He watched her, and he thought, 'I have not offended her. Had my conduct yesterday been regarded as an unpardonable affront, she would not have come to my cottage in the evening. Why should she come? She had already said farewell to Loveday. She comes to show me that I am forgiven.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'P. F.'

Gerans drove Loveday to Wadebridge next day, and saw her and her box safe into and on the coach. Loveday was silent and tearful when she started. She was leaving home, a small home and a humble one—still it was home. This was the second time her home had been broken up. The first time was on the death of her mother, this was on the death of her confidence and belief in her brother. Dennis had turned on her, who had loved him with such tender devotion, and had spurned her from him. Nantsillan could never be to her a home again; when she returned, perhaps she would be recognised by Squire Gaverock as a connection, perhaps not. Either way it mattered little to her; Nantsillan could not be home, because the mutual love and trust which make a home had gone, and would never return the same.

Gerans did not attempt to comfort her, he allowed her to cry her heart's first sorrow away; he was kind and pitiful. Only when he thought her grief was abating did he speak, and bid her hope for the best, and always rely on this, that at Towan there were those who loved her and who would love to hear tidings of her, to whom good news of her would bring the best of pleasure and bad news would afford acutest sorrow. 'Whatever my father may decide, Loveday,' he said, in a kind tone, 'remember that I am your brother. Whether he acknowledge you or not, I am honoured and proud to look to you as bound to me by kinship.' Then in a sad voice, full of humility, 'I'm but a poor sort of a fellow, and am thankful to have one to hold by whom all can respect.'

Loveday looked at him, touched by his kindness, but surprised at the diffident tone. Gerans, strong, hale, handsome; a young squire, with a beautiful young wife. What right had he to speak doubtfully of himself? She was unable to see into his heart. His confidence in himself was rudely shaken. His wife did not love him. The reason was to be sought in

himself, and he was conscious now, for the first time, of his own shortcomings.

Strangely, as he became aware that Rose did not care for him, his love for her became more articulate. It had been inchoate. He had liked her greatly, was attached to her in a dreamy, indistinct way, till he discovered that she had no love for him; then, but not till then, did his love become distinct, ardent—a passion. Loveday saw that his open, pleasant face was clouded, and then it struck her that this arose from more than distress at her departure. She was far too humble-minded to imagine that the loss of such an insignificant person as herself could disturb the bright sky of the young Squire of Towan.

'I hope, Gerans, you have had nothing to vex you,' she asked with some tremor, for she thought it just possible Rose might have spoken to him of the behaviour of Dennis.

He sighed. 'I have nothing very special,' he said. He was so upright, so transparently truthful, that he could not endure to say what was not strictly true, so he corrected himself. 'I should not have said that. "The heart

knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy,"' he said.

'I am not a stranger,' said Loveday, gently; 'and the text speaks of the stranger not intermeddling with joy. The full heart is better if it can overflow into that of a friend—a sister. You have said I am a sister.' He shook his head, and whipped the horse.

'You, dear Loveday, do not know what a tumble down it is to one who thought himself great things to find he is a poor fool. The cock has crowed on the dunghill very loud till the day that the nightingale sang, and then he discovered he was only a dunghill fowl, and hid his head.'

'What hand has made you fall? What voice has sung and made you droop your wings?'

He did not answer her, but looked straight away to the horizon.

After a while, she saw him put up his whip hand to his eyes, and draw the back across them.

'Gerans,' she said gently, in her soft entreating tones, 'tell your sister what is the trouble in your heart.'

'Loveday, you know Rose better than anyone else.'

'I think so. A girl understands a girl, and a man understands a man.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I do not think Rose loves me. That is, truly spoken, I know she does not. You see, she was but a child when I asked her to be mine, and even now she is but a little over nineteen. We waited over her nineteenth birthday to be married. What is a boy of eighteen or nineteen? He is only a boy, wayward, unstable, not knowing his own mind. A girl is the same. I dare say Rose thought there was more in me than there is. I never came up to Constantine in parts. He was in compound substraction before I got out of low division.'

'I am sure you are mistaken,' said Loveday, gravely.

'No, I am not,' answered Gerans; 'in these matters the heart is very keen sighted.'

'Gerans,' said Loveday; 'do not be cast down without occasion. I know Rose intimately. Yesterday she said good-bye to me with such coldness that I was very unhappy, and an hour after she ran down to Nantsillan, and hugged and kissed me and cried; and she

told me she loved me most dearly. Do you know why she was cold before? She told me because she was worried about the servants. She changes her mood, not because she is capricious, but because she can only think of one thing at a time.' He shook his head.

'She has been growing colder and colder towards me.'

'Do not be discouraged. Be kind and attentive to her. Do not reproach her, bear with her. As you say, she is a child. Perhaps she has not yet loved you with ardour—that will come with time, as the seriousness of life impresses itself upon her. She has something of the butterfly in her yet. The ants are given wings for one day to find a home, and when they have found it, they bite off their wings with their own teeth, and settle for life. Rose has but just come to her home, and her shiny, beautiful, rainbow wings are quivering in the sweet air and pure sunshine; do not be impatient, wait—wait, and she will tear them off with her own hands.'

Gerans's face lightened. It was a pleasure to see the shadow glide away.

'A woman,' continued Loveday, 'is a

creeper; she *must* cling to the post to which she is tied, it is her nature to do so.'

Gerans laughed. 'A very wooden post is that to which my blush Rose is bound.'

'One very strong,' said Loveday, quickly, smiling also, 'and sound to the core.'

'Here we are at Wadebridge,' said Gerans; 'and now, before I forget it, I have in my pocket a paper which my aunt Loveys sent up to our house to be given to you. She says that she has marked with red ink the passage about which she spoke to you.'

He fumbled in his pocket, and produced the newspaper, and gave it to Loveday, who, without looking at it, put it in her reticule.

'I shall have abundance of time in the coach for looking at the news and reading the advertisements,' she said.

He handed her from the light cart, and helped the ostler to convey her box to the coach, which was already standing in front of the inn, and the horses were being put in.

The box was hauled to the top of the coach, and strapped down. Loveday stepped into the coach. She was the only passenger inside.

'You have not far to go before you change,'

said Gerans at the window. 'At Bodmin you get into another coach which will convey you to Launceston, where you sleep the night. You will travel to-morrow to Exeter. Here, Loveday, is a little basket of provisions, a roast chicken and some cold eggs and some cake, my mother sends you, and a little bottle of wine. I am so ashamed, I alone have nothing for you but my best, best wishes, dear sister. God be with you.'

'Your best wishes—I prize nothing higher.' She took his hand, and leaning through the window lightly kissed his cheek.

'God bless you, dear Gerans. Be sure of this—whatever clouds and showers you pass through, that true honest heart will lead you at last to great happiness.'

Gerans pressed her hand. 'I accept your words,' he said, 'as the message of an angel.'

Then the driver cracked his whip this way, that way, when round went the wheels—clatter, clatter, went the horses' hoofs on the boulder pavement; a white handkerchief was waved out of the coach window, and Gerans stood, with his hat in his hand, signalling after it.

Then the four horses swung round a corner,

and the scarlet-bodied coach lurched after them; and Gerans saw Loveday no more.

The distance from Wadebridge to Bodmin is but seven miles; Loveday sat back and allowed her tears to flow unrestrained because unobserved. Her talk with Gerans had done her good, she had been able to clear away a trouble that oppressed him. She spoke to him in great sincerity; she understood Rose better than Rose understood herself. She could not believe that Rose was untrue to her husband, even in thought, but she quite believed that her heart had not yet been roused to love and value Gerans as he deserved.

She knew well that one cause, if not the chief cause of Rose's dissatisfaction was her husband's submission to his father. Loveday had not spoken on this matter to Gerans, because he had not alluded to it; but if he had done so, she would have counselled him to continue as heretofore. The caprice of a girl must not turn him against the mature determination of an experienced man. Gerans must think for himself, and if, which was most sure, Rose opposed the old Squire out of empty fancy, out of a spirit of perversity, he must not take his wife's side.

This would displease her at first, but after a while she would admit that he had acted aright.

Loveday was so confident in the rectitude of Gerans that she did not regret not having given him advice on this point. His own conscience would be his best adviser, other counsel was superfluous.

At Bodmin, Loveday got a seat inside the Launceston and Exeter coach only through the courtesy of a gentleman, who had secured an inside seat, but vacated it for her, and went outside.

The day was so fine, the air so exhilarating, that she had little compunction in accepting his offer, and assurance that he preferred a place on the top.

About an hour after leaving Bodmin, as the scenery was uninteresting, and she desired to turn her thoughts away from Nantsillan and Towan for a while, Loveday opened her reticule, and drew forth the paper sent her by Mrs. Loveys. It was a small badly-printed sheet, with a print, rude and blotty, of a lighthouse on the top. Under this woodcut was the title, 'The Light of the West.' It was a religious paper for Sunday reading. As Loveday unfolded it, her eye was

caught by a score of red ink against an advertisement. She looked at the paragraph indicated, and read as follows:

'Wanted, immediately, a gentlewoman by birth and education, to be the companion of a young married lady, with a child, an infant; to assist in the management of the house, and the care of the child. Remuneration liberal. Apply P. F., the Post Office, Launceston. A personal interview desired.'

'Why,' said Loveday to herself, 'this is the very thing I desire. Nothing could suit me better. I will not go on to Exeter to-morrow, I will stay a day in Launceston.'

She thought a good deal about this opening. '"P. F.,"' she repeated to herself, 'P must stand for Priscilla, or Prudence, or Philippa, or Phœbe.'

The long road over the dreary Bodmin moors was not interesting; little presented itself to distract her thoughts from herself and the chance presented to her by the advertisement.

'"P. F.,"' she said. 'I wonder whether I shall come to know and make a friend of "P. F.?"'

As the coach, in the evening, dashed up to

the door of the King's Arms, a gentleman who was walking towards the inn sprang aside from the horses.

The coach drew up at the inn. Then the door was opened, and the gentleman, a tall, grave young man, with very black hair, an aquiline nose, and deep-set dark eyes, courteously came to the coach-door and held out his arm to assist Loveday Penhalligan to descend.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ENGAGED.

When Loveday had settled about a bedroom, and had unpacked what few things she would want for the night, had removed her bonnet and taken off her gloves, and smoothed her glossy, abundant dark hair, she came down into the coffee-room of the King's Arms, and ordered tea and an egg.

The gentleman who had handed her from the coach was there, reading a paper. He was dressed in a long black coat with high velvet collar, and dark knee-breeches with black silk stockings. His hair was black, cut short in front, but falling behind, longer than was usual at the time. Indeed, his dress was antiquated. He was in the costume worn, probably, by his father. His throat was surrounded by a white, fine linen tie, and his waistcoat disclosed beautiful lace ruffles in front.

His manner, like his dress, was old-fashioned and courtly. When he heard Loveday order her frugal repast, he put down the paper he was reading, stood up, bowed, and said :

'Will you excuse the interference, madam, of a gentleman who, though he has not passed through the College of Surgeons, yet exercises some of the functions of a medical man? There are some men, madam, who are born to heal the infirmities of their fellows, who have the instinct, or shall I not say reverently, the inspiration, of healing given to them from on high, without any seeking and study. There are others who acquire laboriously what is intuitive in some. I speak in no spirit of vanity when I say that I am a born physician of the body.'

Loveday looked at him with wonder, marvelling to what this preamble would lead. There was an expression of such goodness, simplicity, and desire to oblige in his striking face, that she felt confidence at once in her strange companion of the coffee-room.

'You have come a long way to-day, madam?'

'Yes, from almost the other end of Cornwall.'

'And you have been journeying the entire day?'

'Yes, sir. I left home early. I have been in two coaches and an open gig.'

'Then,' said he, 'I am confirmed in my audacity in prescribing for you something more substantial than an egg, a bit of toast, and tea. I have ordered a roast fowl for my supper, and a custard pudding. I hope, madam, you will not regard me as taking an undue liberty, being a total stranger, in asking you to share the fowl with me. It would be foul conduct in me to eat the bird, and leave the lady but the egg. Which,' said he, 'is a joke, madam.'

Then he gave directions to the waiter to have two covers laid at the table.

'I believe,' said the gentleman, who was, it need hardly be said, Paul Featherstone, of Marsland, 'that I am the intruder here. The general coffee-room is repugnant to me. There has been smoking in it, and I am averse to the odour of tobacco. I believe that this is, in fact, the private ladies' room, and that I am here only on sufferance, madam. If my presence at all incommodes you, I will withdraw; but I trust to your good nature to endure my

society for a little while. We must both eat, and why not eat in society? Social intercourse gives relish to the best food. I am so accustomed to the company of my sister, that a meal without a lady to grace the board would not agree with me.'

Loveday did not answer him, save with a grateful look. He spoke in so kind a tone, and with a manner so fatherly, that she felt quite safe in his presence and company from the slightest impertinence.

'My sister,' said Paul Featherstone, 'is one of the most remarkable women in the world. It is a privilege to be her brother. She thinks and cares for every one who comes within the radius of her influence, as the sun lights, warms, and attracts every planet in the solar system. But,' said Paul, and his mouth twitched, 'rare confusion am I making in my similitudes. The sun has no satellite, but the planet is allowed one or more. My sister, who has been married for over a twelvemonth, has lately acquired a little, a very tiny bright and shining moon, which sails round her, and never leaves her; and my sister delights in the soft and silvery radiance of her little moon.'

'You speak, sir, as if the presence added to your own pleasure and light.'

'To be sure it does,' answered Paul, his face kindling with a sweet and happy brightness. 'A child in the house is a blessing from on high. I was out at night—I had, in fact, ridden for a doctor, and was returned—and as the groom took my horse, through the still, starry, dark-blue sky we saw a silvery streak; it described a curve, and was formed by a brilliant meteor. When my man saw that I was watching it, he said, "Folks do say that falling stars be little souls coming to babes out o' paradise." And sure enough, when I entered the house, I heard a faint sobbing. The soul had come, and found it dark and desolate here below—away from paradise.'

'You have no children of your own, sir?'

'I!' exclaimed Paul in surprise, and laughed. 'I have not a wife. I have not reached the point of considering it possible that I may have one. No,' he shook his head, 'I pity the woman that would take me. My ideal of womanhood is so high, that she would be ever on the tremble lest she fall short of it. I believe,' continued Paul, dropping into a medita-

tive mood, 'that the characteristic of man is justice, and that of woman is self-abnegation. Excuse me if I seem to say a hard thing, but I do not observe in woman that rooted conscience of justice that I find inherent in men. But, on the other hand, I find immeasurable love in woman, a self-devotion that counteth not the cost, that will give up everything and think no merit lies in doing so. Man, on the contrary, can do a spasmodic act of self-denial, but cannot live a life of it. Man is naturally selfish; woman is instinctively unselfish.'

'And, sir, in evidence of man's natural selfishness, you insist on my partaking of your roast chicken.'

'I beg your pardon. In evidence of my natural justice I offer you half. I could not eat it all myself; you will allow that? I deny myself nothing. Whereas, if you had sat down to your cup of tea and one egg, and you had seen me sitting in the window fasting, you *could* not have broken the end of the egg or touched your cup. Your kind, pitiful eyes would have sought me, and striven to catch mine; and then, with a blush, you would have offered me your egg and untasted cup, and you would have

gone to bed perfectly happy because I had eaten one and emptied the other.'

Loveday winced at the reference to herself, but she smiled and said modestly, 'You judge our virtues higher than they deserve. Your justice is largely qualified with mercy.'

'Not at all,' answered Paul Featherstone. 'I do not pretend that every woman is a perfect pattern of self-abnegation, but that she is set in the key of which self-devotion is the dominant. Whatever be the melody, however varied the harmonies of her life, the dominant underlies the melody, and interpenetrates the harmonies; and at the last the whole piece comes—possibly after changes into other keys—back to the original, and dies away, as its only proper finish, on the dominant. It is the same with man, only the male key has justice for its ruling note. However wrongheaded a man may be, and however criminally he may act, the note of justice is vibrating, thrilling, heard and felt deep down in the depths of his conscience. He may drown it for a while in noise; but, as the noise ceases, the key-note is heard still sounding, and will sound as long as life lasts.'

'I have sometimes thought,' began Loveday; then hesitated, and ceased.

'Yes,' said Paul Featherstone, encouragingly. 'I entreat you to tell me your thought.'

'I have sometimes thought,' said Loveday, with lowered eyes, 'whilst I have been wool-working, that we poor women are embroidering our lives with all sorts of colours, and making of them various figures, but that there must be some common cross-thread on which we all elaborate the varied patterns of our humble lives. You have given me one of the threads, the warp or the woof, I know not which. Is there not another?'

'Yes,' answered Paul. 'Self-abnegation is the woof, religion is the warp. That is not naturally in men, as in women. On these two threads the whole carpet of life is embroidered; done in strange reversed mode, sometimes, as the Gobelin tapestry is wrought, when the maker sees nothing of the design which he is developing. He stands behind the threads, and thrusts his colours in and out—now this, now that—in a blind way, and only those on the other side see the result. It is so with the soul within. Behind these threads, weaving life's beautiful

Gobelin carpet, the soul stands and sees not the end to which it is working—beholds only ragged ends, and irregular threads, and ugly knots—whereas the world sees a beautiful, rich, and consistent whole.'

'I am afraid,' said Loveday, 'we must be content to weave our little lives into kettle-holders, not Gobelin tapestry.'

'And a kettle-holder saves the hand from being burnt,' answered Paul. 'So, many an insignificant modest life has been a hand-guard against much suffering.' Then, looking across the table, he said, 'I see that you have brought your blotting-book, and want to write letters. Do not let me interrupt you. I will go out and take a turn in the town, or, if no inconvenience to you here, will take the newspaper and read.'

'No inconvenience whatever,' said Loveday, readily. 'It is true that I have a couple of letters to write, and there is no ink in my room.'

Paul at once placed the rack of pens and the inkstand on the table, beyond the white table-cloth, and rang for the waiter to remove the supper.

Loveday opened her book, took a couple of

sheets of paper, and, spreading one before her, wrote to Mrs. Loveys. Loveday took a long time in writing this letter. It was well to let Madam know at once that the suit of Anthony was hopeless. She was resolved not to leave Mrs. Loveys and the young man in suspense, or in the delusion that she acquiesced in their arrangement. The sooner they were made aware that she could not accept him the better. Her conscience would be clear. She was thankful for the honour shown her—in her humble mind, she considered it an enormous condescension—but she could not resolve to think of the union as possible. To her brother she had not mentioned the offer, fearful lest he should try to persuade her to the sacrifice for the sake of his interest. Her faith in Dennis was so shaken that she admitted the possibility of this meanness. Yet, when the strange gentleman spoke of woman's self-devotion, she felt her cheeks burn, and was aware with shame that there was one act of self-devotion of which she was not capable. She could not take Anthony Loveys, even for the love she bore to her brother. Had she, perhaps, sufficient of the spice of

masculine justice in her soul to strengthen her against this, as more than a brother had a right to exact? Perhaps so.

The letter to Madam Loveys was a difficult letter to compose. Poor Loveday spoiled her first copy, and had to write a second. She thought long between each line she wrote, and was so engrossed in her thoughts as to completely forget the presence of the gentleman, who was seated in the background behind the newspaper.

As she considered, with her pen to her lips and one hand on the paper, the trace of her thoughts was visible in her pure face, like the fleeting shadows of the clouds during the day over the moor: never deep and threatening, always soft; a bloom, not a gloom; a varying beauty of colour in the pervading sunlight.

Paul Featherstone's eyes, irresistibly attacted to her, watched her, then returned to the newspaper. Paul was ashamed of himself for looking at her. He knew he ought not to do so, as she was unconscious of his presence, but the attraction was too strong for him to fight against it. There was something—he

knew not himself what it was—in Loveday's face which drew his sympathy towards her. He suspected sorrow; he saw intelligence; and he recognised the guileless goodness of her soul by that instinct which exists in all cognate spirits.

Once he noticed a clear trickling tear issue from under her dark lash and roll down her cheek. Then the hand that held the newspaper trembled. Paul was full of pity for suffering, and he would have been glad to comfort the bruised heart of Loveday, if he knew what was her pain.

At length the letter was finished, and folded, and sealed with a wafer. Then she addressed it, put it aside, and wrote the second letter. This was done quickly, without long consideration.

When it was finished she stood up, and then started. She saw Paul Featherstone. She had completely forgotten him. He had said something about going out round the town, and she had perhaps fancied he was no longer in the room. He had remained without noise, and this had led to her error, if it was an error, and not absorption and forgetfulness.

She took up the two letters, intending to go out at once and post them; but Paul Featherstone rose at the same time.

'If you will allow me,' he said, 'I will take the letters for you to the office.'

'Thank you very much,' she replied. 'Only one will have postage to be paid on it—at least I suppose so. The other is to be left till called for.'

He looked at the directions, and smiled.

'You have afforded me a rare pleasure,' he said. 'I shall have to post but one of the letters. The second is addressed to me. I am "P. F."'

Loveday started, and looked at him. The colour went, then came, in her face.

'I need hardly say,' continued Paul Featherstone, 'that it will indeed be a proud thing for me if I can secure your kind, generous services for my sister. I am glad,' he said, after a pause, 'on two accounts; on my sister's, that she should have for her companion one to whom she is sure to cling, and whom she will treasure; on yours, that you should have the opportunity of knowing one whom it is a privilege to know.'

'Sir,' said Loveday, timidly, 'you will

want references. You know nothing of my abilities.'

'I want no references,' answered Paul. 'None in this case are necessary.' He bowed.

'My brother,' faltered Loveday, 'is a surgeon.'

'And I,' said Paul, 'am one also. Unrecognised by the faculty, indeed, but I am a healer of men by natural gift from on high.'

'My name,' she said, 'is Loveday Penhalligan.'

'I am Paul Featherstone, of Marsland. My sister Juliot is Mrs. Rock. She was married just after Christmas twelvemonth to a Mr. John Rock, who lives with me. Miss Penhalligan, shall you be able to travel to-morrow? I am impatient to make you acquainted with my sister Juliot. I am sure you will love her—you cannot fail to love her—she is so good. We are a quiet family, and live in a quiet nook, out of the noise and rush of the current of life, but we are happy and peaceful; and, please God, the peace and happiness of that home will remain unbroken. It has been heightened and deepened by the addition of the little one who has risen on our horizon.

Did I say that he added to our peace? Well—happiness—hardly *quiet*. Miss Penhalligan, this is almost a joke.'

So Loveday went from the house of the surgeon, who was one by science, but without sympathy, to that of the physician, who was one by sympathy, but without science.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE THRESHOLD OF A SORROW.

NEXT day Paul Featherstone and Loveday departed, the former on the box, the latter inside the Stratton coach. At Stratton, Paul's horse and conveyance were awaiting him. He had left them there, when he was on his way to Launceston, on the double business of consulting his lawyer and finding a companion for his sister.

The letter to Madam Loveys had been despatched without its containing any further allusion to the advertisement of 'P. F.' than thanks to the lady for the copy of the paper sent. Loveday had deemed it as well not to say anything about her application till she heard whether it were successful. She resolved to write to Mrs. Loveys and to her brother from her destination, to inform them that she was settled, and to acknowledge her debt to the

former for having directed her attention to the advertisement, which had so speedily answered her most sanguine wishes.

Loveday did not fail to notice the resemblance of the scenery to that of the home she had left. The character of the coast was the same, and the air, fresh and invigorating, was the same.

The evening was closing when she reached Marsland. Paul had been attentive to her throughout the journey, at every stoppage of the coach coming to the window to inquire how she was; and, in the gig, he interested her with his quaint conversation. At Stratton he pointed out to her Stamford Hill, the scene of the victory of the Royalists under Sir Bevil Grenville, in 1643. At Kilkhampton he showed her the valley and the woods where once stood Stowe House, the ancestral home of the Grenvilles. The glimpses of the sea, with the evening sun gleaming on it, converting it into a sea of fire, were like those about Towan. She might almost have believed herself returning home but for the voice of the driver.

As the sun went down Marsland was reached, and a cold grey shadow was on the

courtyard as Paul drove through the gateway into it.

'You are at my house,' said Paul, assisting Loveday to descend. 'Give me your hand, that I may lead you with a welcome over my threshold.'

He conducted her through the rude porch, with old-fashioned gallantry.

'How cold your hand is,' he said.

Loveday stood still. A sudden nervous trembling had come over her.

'Are you ill—over-tired, Miss Penhalligan?'

She put her hand to her brow, to collect her thoughts, which left her for an instant, and answered, 'I am better. A momentary faintness, it is past.'

He took her hand and led her within. 'Welcome, Miss Penhalligan,' he said. 'In God's name I wish you peace and happiness, rest from care, and bright days in the future, across this threshold.'

She bent her head in acknowledgment.

'And now,' he said, 'for my sister.'

In a moment the door at the end of the hall opened, and Juliot scudded the length of

it and fell into her brother's arms. 'Oh, Paul! I did not expect you home to-day.'

'Juliot,' said he, 'I have brought you a friend. This good, sweet lady has done us the honour and conferred on us the favour of paying us a visit, not to be a short one, we trust, sure that she will be a companion to you, and love and be loved by little Con.'

Juliot at once carried off Loveday to the room above the parlour—the room with the southern aspect, the room in which the spinet had stood. The instrument was not there now, it was removed to the drawing-room under it.

Loveday was given whatever she wanted Juliot was full of thought and kindness; but, through all her eagerness to be hospitable, one desire prevailed and transpired. 'You will not mind, as soon as you can, without inconvenience, you will come and see the BABY.'

'I am ready now,' answered Loveday. 'What a pretty room this is.'

'Do you know that in this room lay my husband sick for many days, before he was my husband. I was accustomed to sit in the window, and wait, and watch, and pray that he might recover. But then, I had no thought at

all of him but as a sick man claiming our aid. The room has acquired for me a new charm since then. Mr. Rock is not here to-day. He is at a farm or property we have some little way off, called Stanbury. They are hay-making there, as we are here, and he has to watch the hay harvest there. In this part of the world everything depends on seizing the golden weather when it comes. The sun does not wait on our leisure.'

Then Juliot led Loveday along a passage to the nursery. 'I must tell you that this house has got a king now, reigning by right divine, and as an autocrat. We have to do homage at his little feet. Oh, Miss Penhalligan, they are the dearest little weeny feet! And to see the comical way in which the tiny toes work about and are never at rest! I could spend an hour in merely watching the little feet. But the hands are more beautiful still. You cannot look at them without falling to kiss them. His Majesty is asleep now. You will not disturb him in his sacred repose.'

She brought Loveday to the side of the cradle, an old-fashioned rocking cradle, in which Paul and herself, and perhaps their father, had

slept in infancy. Loveday stooped over the child, and saw that its bright eyes were open. Directly, it began to coo like a dove and pat its hands on the coverlet excitedly, whilst dimples formed in the fat cheeks.

'The darling is awake!' exclaimed Juliot, 'and in a serene temper. How beautiful! How fortunate, Miss Penhalligan. I would not for the world have had you make first acquaintance with his Royal Highness when his mood is contrary. People, involuntarily, are governed by prepossessions formed on first sight. I am so glad you have seen my darling smiling and happy on this first interview.

'Allow me to take him and throne him in my arms,' said Loveday. Seeing a smile on Juliot's face, she put her hands into the crib and took the little fellow out. All Juliot's nerves quivered, and her heart stood still, till her eyes reassured her that Loveday knew how to hold a baby.

The little monarch was quite content to rest his head on the heart and be encircled by the arms of Loveday; he crowed, and puckered up his mouth, and kicked and flapped, expressive of contentment.

'He was born in December, so he is now six months old,' said the delighted mother. 'Take that stool and sit on it, with the little bird nested on your lap. How cosy he is in your arms!'

'He is not in the least shy. He is a precious little treasure.'

'Precious!' exclaimed Mrs. Rock. 'His price is above rubies. Everyone here values him unspeakably high. Paul quite adores him. I cannot give the maids a greater treat than to take him down into the kitchen for them to surround and admire. To-morrow we will carry him into the hay-field, and make sweet hay with him; shall we not, my pet? Shall we fling a bind of hay round your tiny neck, and draw the small head to us, and cover it with kisses? Will you laugh and clap and chirp with joy?'

Loveday sat with the child on her lap, looking at it. As when a vein has been wounded a rush of warm blood pours over the skin, and a mingled sensation ensues of pleasure and pain, so was it now with her. A stream of warm love poured from her heart, but she was sensible of an ache, unaccountable in her gentle breast.

'He takes happily to you,' said Juliot, 'and does not seem to concern himself much about me. Oh, the fickle fellow! Con! Con! Look at your mother!'

Loveday looked suddenly up at Mrs. Rock.

'His name is Constantine,' said Juliot. 'My dear husband had a fancy for it, though it is not his own name, he is called John; nor do I hear that he had any relatives of that name. Paul did not disapprove. Paul says that Constantine was a king of Devon and Cornwall, who resigned his crown and went into a monastery in Scotland. No one knew there who he was, till one day a monk overheard him laughing, whilst grinding corn in a quern, and saying, "What would my people say at home if they saw King Constantine grinding rye, like a donkey in a mill." I did not myself care much for the name at first, but this rogue will make it sweet to me.'

Loveday bowed over the child, and drew it tight to her bosom, laid her face on it, and felt that love and pain were equal in her heart.

'Do you know the name Constantine?' asked Juliot.

'Yes,' answered Loveday, raising her face, 'it is a name that to me is very dear.'

'Have you had any one so-called whom you loved?'

Loveday paused.

'There is a ruined church dedicated to St. Constantine near my home, and I have been very happy there.'

The answer sufficed. Juliot asked no more; she saw that she had touched a tender point in Loveday's heart. 'I dare say I am very absurd,' she said, 'but I will have no nurse to baby; I do everything for him. You can understand, he is a great tie. In fact, I can do nothing else. But, he is too precious to be trusted in rough hands. Look at the weeny bones of the fingers —why, they can be no thicker than pins. Just fancy how easily one of them might be injured!' she shuddered. 'No, I must look after him myself, or have a lady to help me, and relieve me now and then. That is why my brother Paul has urged me to secure suitable assistance. He says that I am made a perfect slave to Constantine; that it must not be, I have other duties to attend to. Of course he is right. My brother is always right. And now, with his usual good fortune, he has lit upon you. I am sure we shall like each other. That is, I am sure I shall

like you. Baby has decided the matter. He has accepted you as my substitute now and then; only now and then, understand, you fickle fellow!' shaking her hand at the child. Then it began to cry, and strain its arms towards its mother. 'There!' exclaimed Juliot, with a triumphant laugh, 'after all he wants to come to his mother! He is not going to desert her! He will not turn away his heart wholly from her! Though she does not object to his giving a part of it, a little part, to Miss Penhalligan.'

'Will you take the stool?' asked Loveday, rising.

'No, no,' answered Juliot, quickly, 'baby and I are quite content on the chair. Look! he is patting his hands! Bake a cake, bake a cake, baker's-man.' Then ensued that loving play with the child, familiar to all women. Loveday put her face close to the little fellow and kissed, then drew it away again, and he crowed, and kicked, and went into fits of ecstatic laughter, and clapped his warm, soft little palms on her cheeks, and proceeded to munch her with his toothless gums.

The pride and delight of the mother were unbounded. Her heart warmed to Loveday,

and she slipped into calling her by her Christian name before an hour was past.

'You drove with my brother from Stratton,' said Mrs. Rock. 'What a privilege! Paul is a remarkable man, whom it is an advantage to know. I am so glad you have made his acquaintance; you will learn to value him more and more every day, he is so good. Indeed, I look up to him with wonder and reverence, and the poor people regard him with extraordinary respect. You will not see my husband to-night; he does not return from Stanbury till the hay is carried. And now, if you do not mind going down into the hall, I will send the rogue to sleep. Then we will have supper, which I am sure both you and Paul need after your long journey.'

Loveday descended to the hall, and found Paul Featherstone there.

'You have seen the baby,' he said, 'and you have seen my sister. I am glad you know her; to make her acquaintance is an event in the life.'

Loveday's attention was arrested by the picture of Featherstone the Rover. She started.

'How very strange!' she said.

'That is the portrait of my uncle,' said Paul.

'How strange!' repeated Loveday, with her eyes still on the picture.

'The dress, no doubt, strikes you as peculiar.'

'I have seen—at least, it seems to me that I must have seen him.'

'That is quite impossible. He died long before you were born.'

Loveday considered. Then she said, thoughtfully, 'Yes, of course it is impossible, and yet ——' Then a faintness and a shudder came over her, such as she had felt on crossing the threshold.

'You are not well,' said Paul, in alarm, 'you have been overdone. Sit down. You must take a glass of wine.'

'Thank you,' answered Loveday, seating herself with her back to the picture, 'it is nothing; it is over again. It seemed to me as if I were stepping—I hardly knew whither—into some terrible, overwhelming horror. As if I were on the threshold of some great sorrow.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN THE HAY-FIELD.

A DAY of cloudless brilliancy, a day of days for the haysel. The wind was off shore, and therefore the sea was still, and reflected the white distant cliffs of Lundy, and the passing sail. The air was fragrant with hay. There had been a succession of beautiful days, and the farmers were making the most of it—all but a few laggards, noted for invariably cutting when they ought to be sowing.

Loveday was occupied through the greater part of the morning unpacking her box, and arranging her possessions in the room assigned to her. This was the same into which Juliot had first shown her—the same that Constantine had occupied. It was the best bedroom, reserved for visitors, but the Featherstones had no strangers staying with them. They had no acquaintances at a distance, and few in their immediate neighbourhood.

She had some little ornaments of her own, relics of the home where she had spent her childhood with her mother. She had removed nothing that she might have laid claim to by right from the sitting-room at Nantsillan, only the trifles of her own bedroom, which her brother would not miss.

She came, when she had done, into the nursery, and insisted on taking little Con into the garden, the pretty garden on the southern slope, walled in, with its old-fashioned flowers. Paul was passionately attached to flowers; and he had his beds of herbs—simples, which he used, after the advice of old Culpepper. Every walk and bed in the garden was scrupulously cared for, weeded and trim; and herbs and flowers repaid the attention shown them. Nothing gave Paul greater delight than to spend a fine morning in his garden. 'When man was in a state of innocency,' he said, 'God put him in a garden; and through a garden, methinks, we steal back to innocency.'

All Loveday's anxieties, and the strange misgiving that had come over her on the preceding evening, had passed away. She was very happy and hopeful. Not a word had been

said about money—the amount of remuneration for her services. As with Constantine, so with Loveday, this was left undetermined; but Loveday knew as well that Paul would overpay her services, as he knew that she would undervalue them.

In the garden she saw Mr. Featherstone, in his plain grey suit and blue worsted stockings, with a spud, engaged on one of the beds. He came towards her at once, and said:

'You have a great privilege and responsibility, Miss Penhalligan, in the custody of this urchin. Every responsibility is tied to a blessing, and there is no blessing unencumbered with a duty. "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder." As this little fellow grows up, we shall have to use the utmost circumspection to provide that he grows aright. Look here, Miss Penhalligan' (he stooped, and picked a tender double-leaf). 'Do you know what this is? It is the seed-leaf of a plant. I have plucked it, and it will never now come to life. It has been killed, and I know not of what nature it was. The soul of a child is sown thick with seeds, and these seeds spring up rapidly, developing thus double-leaves, from

which you can hardly tell what their promise is. You will have to use the utmost care not to pluck up the good along with the tares.'

'I hope,' said Loveday, 'that the child's little soul will become like this trim and pleasant garden, where nothing grows but what is healthful and beautiful.'

'It cannot fail to be other,' said Paul Featherstone, 'with two such gardeners as you and Juliot.'

Then he fell to thinking, leaning on his spud, with his eyes on the ground, and seemed forgetful of the presence of another. After a while he drew two circles in the gravel with the end of his spud, the circles cutting each other, so as to form a long and narrow ellipse.

'Man stands,' said Paul, 'at the intersection of the two spheres, the material and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural. There' (he made a mark with the tool), 'there stands little Con now, and he will either stand there all his days, or be drawn away to the centre of one circle or the other. All early training must be towards the maintenance of equilibrium, towards the education of man to perfection—that is, to live equally in both spheres-

I think I said to you the evening we were first acquainted that woman was naturally more religious than man. That is, she has her place more on the spiritual side of the ellipse, and, therefore, on her the spiritual centre exerts a greater attraction. The tendency of man is to gravitate more and more towards the material; and if once he passes out of the spiritual sphere beyond that curve' (he indicated what he meant with the spud) 'then he is a man with reason —intelligence, may be—but without soul any more. He is outside the spiritual sphere. The tie or attraction between him and the spiritual centre is broken. There is no longer attraction outside a sphere. This is what I want, what I pray, that our little babe may from infancy be so turned that the centre of the spiritual circle may attract him more and more through life, till'—he drew his tool along the gravel—'till he passes out of the material circle, he has traversed that arc, and the gross things of life affect him no more.'

'I suppose,' said Loveday, 'that the nearer one is drawn to either centre, the stronger the attraction becomes, and the more rapid the movement towards it.'

'It is so,' answered Paul. Then he caught the child from her, and held it above his head in his strong arms, with the face to the sky, and in the brilliant sun. 'See!' he said. 'Never hold the child with its eyes on shadow; always set its face to the light. That is the great secret of life's training.' He kissed the babe tenderly, and returned it to Loveday's arms; then he said, 'You understand me, for you have your face towards the centre of spirit and life and light, and so has Juliot.'

'And Mr. Rock?'

'I do not judge any man,' answered Paul, and resumed his spud and walked away.

Loveday noticed a slight look of disappointment on his earnest, kind face. It was not the first time she had observed this; whenever allusion had been made to his brother-in-law the look had come over him, as a faint and very transient shadow.

Then Loveday, watching Paul at his bed of herbs, standing in the full sunlight, thought how different was his theory of life from that of her brother. Paul looked at the light, and Dennis's face was set towards the shadow. Presently Mr. Featherstone returned to her.

He had been thinking whilst working, and, pointing to the space between the arcs, drew a line, cut at each end by the circumference of a circle, and said, 'That is the measure of man's free will. When he passes beyond the curve his power of volition ceases; he is inevitably drawn to the centre. We oscillate between the arcs. Hark! I am wanted.'

He stood listening, and Loveday heard the tramp of a galloping horse along the road, then down the avenue.

In another moment a man, excited and hot, came into the garden, holding a handkerchief.

'Please, your honour,' he said, 'John Vosper have a-gone and cut hisself bad wi' a scythe in the leg, and us can't stop the flow of blood noways; so I've brought this to your honour.'

Mr. Featherstone took the kerchief within both his hands. His face became grave, and his eyes fixed, and his look abstracted. He passed the kerchief once between his palms, and handed it back to the man.

'Ride back as fast as you can,' he said, 'and bind this about his leg. The blood, however, is already stayed. Do not touch the kerchief

with more than the tips of your fingers; ride holding it at arm's length.'

When the man was gone, Loveday looked at Paul Featherstone with amazement.

'I am obliged to remain at home during hay and corn harvests,' he said. 'So many accidents occur, and I like to be where I may be found at once.'

'Do you mean that—you have really stopped the bleeding of this man Vosper's leg?'

'Yes,' answered Paul, with wonder at her doubt; 'of course I have—yet not I; the power given me has done it. It never fails. Not I—no, not I.'[1]

Paul was about to return to his work, when the garden gate was again opened, and a poor young man hobbled in on crutches.

'Good-morning, Tooke. Come to have your knee struck?'

'Yes, your honour; it be a deal easier since your honour have blessed 'n'

[1] Lest the author should be charged with transgressing the bounds of truth in this account, he assures the reader that such a method of arresting hæmorrhage is resorted to still in the West of England, and he has known persons such as Paul Featherstone constantly resorted to as thus described—and practising successfully.

'Sit down on the bench, James,' said Featherstone; and, kneeling on one knee before the cripple, he laid his hand on the swollen joint, and as he did so the same fixed, far-away look came into his eyes that Loveday had noticed when he had the kerchief between his palms.

'I seem to feel the pain drawed out by your finger ends,' said the lad. 'I know exact to a line where your honour's fingers have rested; there be no hurting there, but lines o' ache where they have not touched.'

'Is the swelling gone down, James?'

'O yes, your honour—gone down powerful.'

'That will do for to-day; come again to-morrow. Now go round to the kitchen and stay there, and tell the maids you are to have your dinner. Do not stint the beef, James.'

The next to arrive were two women with a baby.

'The little chap have got the thrush,' said the mother. 'Us have took 'n and passed 'n at new moon three times under a bramble as is growed to both ends in the ground, but all to no good. Us have gotten naught by it but a lot o' scratches.'

'And you deserve them,' said Paul. 'You have no right to have recourse to superstitious methods. Superstition is sinful. How can you expect a cure if you apply to such unblessed remedies. Give me the child. Open its mouth; I will put my finger in.' When he had done this, he gave the infant back to the mother. 'There,' he said, 'you need not return to me; the eruption will begin to disappear to-day, and in a couple of days the child will be well. Ask the dairy-maid to give you a quart of new milk.'

The next to arrive was an old woman with sore eyes.

'Betty,' said Featherstone, 'go every morning and wash your eyes in the water of the Holy Well. Now see if the cook can give you a little dinner. You have had a long, hot walk. If you cannot eat the meat, there is pudding you will like.'

That the beef, and the milk, and the pudding had anything to do with the drawing of patients to Marsland, or with the cure of the under-fed, Featherstone did not suppose; nor, to do them justice, did the sick attribute their healing to anything other than the touch of his hand. Loveday, who had seen nothing of the self-

seeking in her own visitors, thought that in this case there may have been deception, not in Paul Featherstone himself—he was absolutely sincere, and believed thoroughly in the powers lodged in him—but in the patients. She ventured to say as much, sure that her remark would not be taken ill.

'Do you not think, Mr. Featherstone, that the sick may come as much for what they can get in your kitchen as in this your consulting-room?'

'Perhaps,' he replied, quite undisturbed by the suggestion. 'No motives are wholly pure; they are always more or less double, more or less charged with earthly particles. My motives are never absolutely translucent; all men's motives are like water—analyse, and there is something in the clearest; but then, the only perfectly pure water is that which has been distilled, and that is undrinkable.'

In the afternoon Juliot and Loveday went together to the hay-field, carrying the baby. The harvest was nearly over, the last of the fragrant loads were being taken home, and tea and saffron buns were carried into the field for the men. Most of the servant-maids were there

as well, raking the hay together, laughing and joking with the men.

Every now and then a rake was dropped, and one of the young men was seen with a whisp of twisted hay pursuing a girl, trying to catch and hold her with the hay-loop whilst he kissed her. The pressure of work was over, the strain was relaxed, a little romp and relaxation were allowable now.

Juliot and Loveday sat under the shade of some trees, beneath a hedge wreathed with pink wild rose and honeysuckle, and with clusters of meadow-sweet, white, scattering their powdery pollen on the arms that brushed them, climbing the steep hedge-bank as refugees from the all-destroying scythe.

The yellow evening sun bathed the hay-field in bands striking through the trees; the doves were cooing in the wood; the butterflies dancing about the dried grass, and then fluttering away to the fresh flowers in the hedge-rows. A bumble-bee in brown and yellow deep pile velvet was humming round the baby as though it thought honey was to be gathered from it—in reality attracted by the wreath of wild rose Loveday had made for his white

washing hat, that would fall flapping over the little fellow's face, and make him growl in protest.

Loveday was very happy. Her clouds seemed to have parted and rolled out of her sky. The delight of having a baby to worship and play with, and of having one so sweet, womanly, and sympathetic as Juliot to talk to, filled her heart to the brim. For a while the cares of the past were lost sight of; she gave herself over to the unmixed pleasure of the present. The two ladies were seated a little way from the harvesters; the laughter and calls lost harshness, and were wafted to them as pleasant music by the fragrant air, along with strands of grass, and seeds of hawk-weed, and black leaves of meadow clover.

The maids had lighted a fire, and slung a kettle, to make the tea, and the white smoke rose above the hedge in a thick curl, and was then dispersed as a blue vapour through the wood.

Every kind of distraction was offered to the baby. A chain of daisies was made by Loveday, and suspended round his neck, to be at once torn to pieces by his impatient hands;

dandelion 'clock' heads were puffed, to ascertain the hour; the golden buttercup was held in the sun under his fat chin, to prophesy whether he would love butter; a tiger moth, with yellow, crimson, and black wings, was suffered to creep unmolested along Loveday's hand, till the little fellow made a dab at it with his, and then the insect, startled, flew away. Honeysuckle trumpets were picked, and the sweet drop expressed on baby's lips; then the little red tongue was poked out and curled about the lips, much as a lizard protrudes his tongue to catch up its food. Loveday's gold watch-chain was suddenly laid hold of, and wrenched, and almost broken. Out flew the watch Mrs. Gaverock had given her, and that was held first to one ear, then the other. Nothing satisfied Con for long. Some new distraction was demanded every minute, and the ingenuity of the mother and Loveday taxed to the uttermost.

Paul Featherstone remained at home till Constantine arrived.

'Done the haysel at Stanbury,' said the latter joyously. 'First-rate crop, and splendidly carried. How are you getting on here?'

'Very well indeed. The last loads are now returning. Will you come with me to the field?'

'Yes. Is my wife there with the baby?'

'And her companion,' said Paul. 'I have had the best success, John Rock. Providence has blessed us in this as in all we do. I do not believe if I had the world to pick from I could have found one better fitted for the post she is designed by us to fill. She has won her way already to Juliot's heart, and little Con is as content with her as in the arms of his mother.'

'Where did you pick her up?'

'At Launceston.'

'Was she well recommended?'

'Her face, her voice, her whole appearance, were her best recommendation. You cannot look at her and not trust her.'

'What is her name?'

'Penhalligan.'

'What!' Constantine's heart stood still.

'Come with me—I am going to the hay-field—and you shall see and judge for yourself.'

Paul Featherstone did not observe the alarm in the face of his brother-in-law. He put on his

hat and went out at the door. Constantine followed. 'It is impossible,' he muttered. 'There is no occasion to be uneasy. There are hundreds of Penhalligans beside Loveday.' He plucked up courage at the thought, and strode alongside of Paul. But he did not speak to him. He was busied with his own uneasy thoughts and alarms. He asked no more questions. He was afraid to do so, as he was unable for some moments to command his voice.

They reached the harvest-field. The last load of hay was being heaped on the waggon. Paul went towards the men.

'There,' he said, pointing to the shade under the hedge, 'there they are. Go and make Miss Penhalligan's acquaintance.'

Constantine walked in the direction indicated. He could see his wife with the baby in her arms seated on the bank. The back of the other lady was towards him, and she was bent, so that he could not make out her form.

Loveday was, indeed, crouching before the little child, counting the buttons of its dress, saying slowly, as she went from one to the

other, 'Tinker—tailor—soldier—sailor—gentleman—apothecary—ploughboy—thief. My pet is not—never can be that. Tinker—tailor—will he be a soldier? Not a cruel soldier, to kill and be killed. Sailor, to be tossed on the deep sea and wrecked?' She sighed. 'Gentleman? Of course, of course! nothing else; my golden boy can be nothing else but a gentleman—the sweetest, dearest——'

'Loveday,' said Juliot, interrupting the other who, in a transport of love and happiness, had clasped the tiny gentleman in her arms and was covering him with kisses, 'Loveday, my husband.'

Loveday rose to her knees, without looking round, then to her feet, stood, turned, and was face to face with Constantine!

For one moment—but it seemed to him an hour—they confronted each other in silence, then, without a cry, without a word, Loveday fell, as though he had struck her down with an axe.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AT THE GATE.

Constantine hovered irresolute whether to help Loveday to rise or to turn and escape. His mind was in confusion. He knew that a great danger menaced him, but he had no readiness of resource to make an attempt to escape from it. Juliot had not a suspicion of the cause of Loveday's fall; she attributed it to a turn of the ankle or a trip in a root, and she asked anxiously if she were hurt.

'John, give her your hand. What is the matter, dear? Have you hurt yourself?' She was unable to assist her, as she held the baby.

But Loveday, herself, rose unassisted. Constantine held out his hand, but she did not accept it. She pressed both her palms to her brow, as though by the pressure to assure herself that she was awake and in her senses, and not the prey to a horrible delusion. She looked

into Constantine's eyes to be certain that it was he, himself—her husband, esteemed dead—who stood before her. She read the confirmation in his confusion and dismay.

Then she turned away. Accustomed for many years to self-control, but never before tried as she was tried now, her powers of restraint over herself did not wholly desert her. She said nothing; she could not speak; she could scarce see. It was as though the smoke from the fire that had been lighted for the haysel tea-drinking had blown before her eyes; she looked into a mist; sounds she heard as from a distance.

'Loveday,' said Juliot, 'you are ill, you look death-like. I entreat you, go home.'

She did not stir; she moved her lips, and held out her hands mechanically, to take the child.

'No,' said Juliot. 'Indeed, and indeed you shall not. You were over-tired with the journey yesterday, and the day before. You turned faint last evening, Paul told me. I am sure you are not well; go home.'

But still the words, though they entered her ear, met with no response. She heard

them, but they struck on her ear without her knowing what their meaning was.

Juliot was alarmed at her appearance.

'John,' she said, 'give her your arm, take her home; she is very much upset by the journey, and the sun has been hot. Go, dear Loveday, go with him. I insist on it.'

'If you insist, yes,' answered Loveday, dimly conscious that she had been given an order.

Juliot was distressed. 'I did not mean to speak harshly, only in your own interest. John, take her with you.'

'I shall be better directly,' said Loveday, recovering her composure slightly; 'I should like some cold water.'

'You shall have some. John, take her to the spring,' said Juliot, tenderly. 'Lean on him, dear; he is strong and will support you, and a few steps will do you good—it will enable you to recover yourself.'

Constantine drew Loveday's arm through his, and hurried her away; he was nervous, alarmed, eager to get her out of the field before Paul saw that she was unwell, lest he should come after her, and interfere with his

having a few words with her in private. He looked over his shoulder as he went along, and pressed Loveday to walk faster than she was able, till they were in the lane alone. Then he somewhat relaxed his speed; then also she withdrew her hand from his arm, and walked at his side in silence. He could not speak. What to say, how to excuse his conduct, he knew not.

She did not turn her face to him, she walked with her arms by her sides, and her eyes fixed in a lustreless stare before her. She would have walked into the hedge at the turn of the lane if he had not touched and turned her. The lane descended into the coombe; a gate to the west allowed an orange belt of sunlight to fall across it, and strike on the little stream, here only a spring which shot over a stone mantled with the greenest moss, and fell a few feet into a drain which passed under the way. The rock about the spring was overhung with delicate fern, now shining in the sun, which struck on it obliquely.

Loveday saw and staggered to the spring; she could go no farther, her strength was deserting her, and her consciousness failing. She

clung to an ash root in the hedge that was clear of earth. Constantine filled his hat with water and sprinkled the cold drops in her face. She revived, looked at him, at first with gratitude, then with fear. Her first instinct was thankfulness for a kindness shown her, her first impulse to acknowledge it; but this was followed by the recollection of who it was who helped her, and the terror that this knowledge awoke overwhelmed every other thought.

When she was somewhat recovered, she remained leaning against the hedge, clinging to the grey ash root. The orange evening sun was on her pale face, and sparkled in the water-drops that hung in her hair, on her lashes, and that trickled over her cheeks. She did not wipe them away, she did not feel them. They were not tears. She could not cry. They were the fresh drops from the spring. She looked with unswerving eyes before her, at a delicate quivering maidenhair fern that caught the draught through the gate, and swayed and shuddered and flashed in the sun, then dropped out of it. She saw this, and followed every vibration of the frond in all that followed. She was not interested in the

fern, but she saw and noted it, and to her last hour that dancing frond of fern was associated in her mind with the interview with Constantine at the spring.

'I am very, very sorry for this,' faltered he.

She made no answer. What could she answer? Her bosom rose and fell, and every inspiration was like a knife piercing her. The mental anguish translated itself into physical suffering, so closely were the forces correlated. She stood, as Paul had said, in two spheres, and spiritual and bodily anguish were as one to her in this supreme hour.

'Loveday,' he continued, 'why do you not look at me? Why do you not speak? I suppose you considered me dead.'

She slightly bent her head.

'I was wrecked, Loveday—that is, I was washed off the keel of the "Mermaid" and was picked up insensible by the boat of Paul Featherstone. I was much hurt; my head had struck the side. I lay for a long time unconscious, and when I came round to life I was here, at Marsland.'

She slightly moved her hand on the root of the ash, in token that she was listening. She

had no glove on the hand, the sun shone warm over the long, delicate, sensitive fingers—fingers that spoke of a refined mind.

'I was here,' Constantine went on. 'Paul Featherstone made me his steward to Stanbury, and then he forced his sister on me. I did not want to do what was wrong, but I am weak, I dare say you know that, and the temptation came to me. It was very wrong of Paul Featherstone proposing it to me. He ought to have known better. What was I to say when I had set before me the prospect of dismissal and beggary, if I did not come to his terms?'

Loveday looked steadily at him, and her lips opened.

'Constantine,' she said, 'this is not true.'

'It is true,' he answered, his eyes falling before hers. 'That is—he did not know, of course, about you, and he made a mistake about my name. However, that is passed. It is no use crying over spilt milk. What has been done is past undoing. I am very sorry, and I know I have acted very wrongly. I am sure my conscience has reproached me for it over and over again. I cannot help myself, the thing is done; and, now, if I knew

what was the right thing to do, I would do it; but you see, yourself, Loveday, what a predicament I am in. Paul Featherstone is a very strict-thinking, pedantic fellow. When he knows all, I shall be handed over by him to the constables, I shall be sent to prison, tried at the assizes for bigamy, and be transported for life. That is what will be my fate when this becomes known. I do not see how Featherstone can act otherwise.'

'What am I to do! O my God! my God!' cried Loveday, clasping her hands on the root.

'He must give me in charge; then comes the disgrace to my name and family. My father—my poor, poor mother! What will Gerans say? It will cover him with shame. He will never hold up his head again. As for my mother, it will kill her.' He sighed and moaned. 'There is only one chance of escape,' he said, 'and that is for you to hold your tongue. If you tell all, I am not gained to you. You lose me for ever, as I shall be sent as a convict to Van Diemen's Land to work in chains, in prison clothes till I die. What then will be the advantage of your telling?

None to yourself, and infinite distress to others. If you want revenge on me, very well, you shall have it.'

She raised her hand deprecatingly.

'Whom else do you desire to punish—my mother? I thought you liked her. Gerans? —he is your brother's friend. Then consider these people here. Tell the truth, and what is Juliot? A betrayed woman with a bastard.'

Again she raised her hand deprecatingly.

'Paul Featherstone is a just man, and he will believe it his duty before God and man to bring me to justice. Let him do so, and cover two—three families with ignominy, his family, mine, and yours. You will come in for the disgrace as well, remember, for you will be indicated as the woman with a convict husband.'

Loveday covered her face with her hands. She was not thinking of herself, she was thinking of Paul Featherstone, of his horror when he knew the truth, of the unspeakable shame that would fall on Juliot and her babe. She thought also of Mrs. Gaverock, and she knew that if told that her loved Constantine was alive and a felon, with a blasted name, she

would die of a broken heart. She thought also of honest Gerans, of his trouble about Rose. Was she going to add to this trouble?

She raised her head, and again stood looking intently at the quivering maidenhair fern. Her soul trembled like it, but unlike it, in darkness, not in light.

By a cruel fatality the happiness of all those whom she loved, and who had been good to her, was put into her hands to destroy with a word: of Mrs. Gaverock, Gerans, Rose, Paul Featherstone, Juliot, and the little babe. She would bring shame also on Madam Loveys, and stupid Anthony. She had herself desired that her marriage with Constantine should be kept secret. Now was she to publish it to bring about general dismay, and to cover those she loved and regarded with dishonour?

'Hark!' cried Constantine, 'I hear the cheers. The last load is made up. The waggon is in motion, the harvesters will be here. Loveday, have pity on me; do not be cruel!'

They could hear the creak of the wheels of the laden waggon on the road, the shouts of the waggoners, and the clash of the ironshod hoofs on the stones.

'Loveday!' said Constantine, trembling and turning cold, 'if you have any love for me still, keep silence for a few days only, till I have considered what is to be done. I shall find a way out of this desperate difficulty, if you give me time. Oh, Loveday, we are all weak, frail, sinful creatures! Forgive me as you hope to be forgiven yourself!'

'Self-abnegation is the woof of woman's life,' Paul had said to her; his words, or the tenor of them, rose in her mind, and strengthened her to embroider a little more of her pure story over that sad thread.

She could not speak, but she held out her hand.

Constantine grasped it and said, 'Thank you, Loveday, this is like you.'

Then, without a word or a look at him, without returning the pressure of his hand, she went up the lane to the avenue and gate of Marsland.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WOOF.

PAUL FEATHERSTONE came on before the waggon, and caught Constantine up at the gate and spring. He had not left the spot where Loveday had extended to him her hand in assurance that she would keep silence—for a while.

Twice had he persuaded her not to speak, to be secret about their marriage. The first time when they were married, now—when she found herself cruelly betrayed. The imposition of silence on her on the former occasion had brought with it a train of sorrow, the imposition of silence on her now was the only means of averting dishonour and misery indescribable. Would she keep her promise? For how long would she restrain her tongue? What way was to be found out of this tangle? Constantine's head was full of questions, to none of which could he give an answer. He must have

time to find a means of escape from the dilemma. He was incapable of seeing any at present in his then condition of dismay and bewilderment.

'What is this I hear?' asked Paul. 'Miss Penhalligan is ill, Juliot tells me; you were to have escorted her to Marsland. Why are you standing here, Rock?'

'She is better. She has gone on by herself. She did not require my aid. A fit of giddiness soon over.'

'Ah! something of the sort came upon her yesterday. Poor soul, she has been over-strained in mind and body! There is a look in her face as if she had dipped her foot into the bitter waters of Marah.'

'I know nothing of that,' said Constantine; 'I dare say the journey has upset her. She will be right again in a day or two. Do not tax her energies too much for a while. I will speak to Juliot to spare her.'

'You should not have allowed her to go on alone,' said Paul, reproachfully, and the same shade of disappointment that Loveday had noticed stole across his face. 'Juliot trusted you to see her to the house in safety, and you should have fulfilled exactly the trust.'

Constantine's lip curled, but he said nothing.

Paul and he walked on. As they ascended the hill the former turned to him, 'I beg your pardon, Rock; I ought not to have reproved you so sharply. She may have laid her commands on you, which would alter the case. I was alarmed for her. A fit might take her, unawares, and she fall on the hard stones. I could not endure the thought, and it was present to me when I rebuked you.'

'Say no more about it.'

'And yet I am not sorry that I was led to speak. I do wish, John Rock, that you were more reliable. My words are kindly meant, take them kindly. We have all our faults, I chief of all, and if you blame me where I have done amiss I will accept the admonition thankfully and endeavour to amend. I deal with you as I would be dealt by. John, during the past eighteen months I have had brought to my mind irresistibly, and involuntarily, the story of the son who said to his father, "I go, sir, and went not."'

'Had you not better apply to the Bishop for a licence to preach?' asked Constantine, irritably.

'No,' answered Paul, insensible to irony, 'I have no wish for that. My vocation is for the life of a recluse, not for a public career. But you are evading the subject, Rock.'

'I am getting too old to be lectured.'

'But not to learn. We are learning all our days, correcting what is wrong, and acquiring what is deficient. Do not resent what I have said.' He stood still and looked back along the lane. 'The dew is beginning to fall. I wish Juliot would come. I want to hear how our friend is. Will you go back, John, and help to carry the baby, or shall I?'

'You seem so anxious about the young lady that you had better go on, Featherstone, and peep or listen at the keyhole, to learn how she is. We are none of us, you know, too old to learn.'

Paul Featherstone looked at him with astonishment. He understood neither his tone, nor the sneer in his words, but they grated on him.

'I do not take your meaning, John Rock—I never pry and listen. I could not do so. You have greatly misunderstood me, to think such a thing possible. I want to know how

Miss Penhalligan is, because she is ill and because she is my guest.'

Constantine scarcely waited for the end of his sentence. He walked back to meet his wife with the child.

Paul turned towards the house. 'He has hurt me,' said Paul. 'But he did not mean it. He is thoughtless.'

Loveday on reaching the house had gone to her room, and thrown herself on the bed. She could not cry. She was as one half-stunned. She was conscious of what had taken place, but she felt a numbness in her brain, which prevented her from fully realising it, as it affected herself, and from forming a resolution for the future. The discovery had been so sudden, so overwhelming, so utterly unexpected.

She trembled, and the bed shook under her; she had folded her hands and lay with her cheek on them, looking at the wall with wide-open eyes. Her breath came fast, and her pulses throbbed in her temples, and each throb was like the stroke of a hammer against her head. Paul Featherstone had told her that the

science of life was to turn the face to the light; but where was light to which she could look? There was open to her only an abyss of gloom. Instinctively she had turned, as she lay on her bed, away from the window to look at a blank and shadowed wall. Everything before her was blank. There was no exit, no escape.

So Juliot found her lying, when she came to her. At the sound of Juliot's voice a shudder, more violent and convulsive than her continuous trembling, shook Loveday's frame; and when Mrs. Rock bent over her to ask how she was, Loveday with horror thrust her away, but immediately repented, sat up, and held forth her arms, entreating pardon.

Juliot asked if she felt herself better? Yes—she was better. If she wanted anything? No—nothing but to be alone.

At this Juliot retired, and Loveday reproached herself for having answered uncourteously. She wanted nothing, nothing whatever but that. What else could she desire? Constantine was lost to her more fatally than if he had been engulfed, as she had believed, by the sea. Then she could think of him as still her own Constantine, although in

another world, and cherish her love of him and the remembrance of his love. Now he was lost wholly to her. Her respect for him was gone, she was robbed of that as she had been robbed of her respect for her brother. She loved Constantine still, and she loved Dennis still, but the love for both was a pitiful, sorrowing love, a love that stooped, not that stood on tiptoe. She could not wish to have Constantine to herself, for she could no longer honour him. Even if she had desired him, she could not have him, for to assert her claim was to condemn him to transportation.

She remembered the morning when she was married in St. Sidwell's Church at Exeter, and the solemn sincerity with which she had vowed to hold to Constantine till death parted them. How could she be true to her oath if she now renounced him; yet how could she be true to him without committing great cruelty to others? She was morally bound to keep her promise, and yet, it seemed to her, she would be morally wrong if she asserted her claim.

Her thoughts went round and round in her brain, the same thoughts, never getting any farther, sometimes revolving more furiously

than at other times, but not for a moment stationary, as though within her skull was a mill-wheel that rushed and scattered the foam about, now swiftly, now slowly, always going, never at rest. She lay perfectly motionless on her bed, with her feet crossed, and her hands closed, and her cheek on them, but her thoughts whirled incessantly and could not be arrested.

So she lay till darkness had closed in; then again Juliot came to her room, this time with a cup of tea and some toast. Loveday sat up on the bed, but her hand shook so that she spilt the contents of the cup, and her throat rose and prevented her from swallowing the toast.

'You are ill,' said Juliot, with anxiety; 'let me send for a doctor.'

'I am not ill,' answered Loveday; 'I am unhappy. I shall be better to-morrow.'

Then she laid her head again on her hands, and her hands on the pillow, in the same position, and said no more. And again, impatient at the interruption, the wheel of thoughts went rushing round, and round, and round again in her hot, aching brain. She was unconscious

that Juliot was still in the room, standing by the bed watching her. Juliot remained some minutes with her eyes on her, perplexed and uneasy. Presently she said, 'My dear girl, you must undress and go to bed. You cannot lie there. Let me help you off with your gown.'

Then Loveday shuddered and held her hands to her bosom to prevent Juliot from touching her dress, and uncovering the blue silk thread, and seeing the gold wedding-ring that hung there.

'No! no!' she exclaimed, with such terror in her voice that Juliot desisted. 'Let me alone.'

'I will not let you alone unless you promise me to go to bed. You are either ill now, or are on the eve of an illness.'

'I promise; I promise,' gasped Loveday, and she sat on her bed, and watched Juliot with wide, alarmed eyes, till she left the room. Then only mechanically did she undress, and lie down.

Sleep she could not. Even whilst engaged removing her clothes, she was conscious of the revolution of the wheel of thoughts, specula-

tion, doubts, conjectures, in her head; every thought, and doubt, and imagination was armed with a blade that cut, like the spikes of a catherine-wheel, that tore and tortured her relentlessly. And now to her former thoughts there came another, an added dread, lest she should become really ill, unconscious or delirious, and that in this state the ring in her bosom would be seen, and her tongue might blab the secret. She folded her hands over the ring, and pressed them and it to her breast, and the ring became white hot, and burnt its way, little by little, deeper and yet deeper in through the tender skin and flesh, and buried itself in the palpitating heart, and there it spun round and round and threw out drops of molten gold, burning with unspeakable anguish, drop on drop, drop on drop, but never would melt away.

She considered whether, in her box, in her drawers, in a book, anywhere, there was a written line that would reveal the secret, should curious eyes search them whilst she was unconscious. No—there was nothing; all Constantine's letters were destroyed. There was nothing but the ring to betray her.

Through all the tossings, and turnings, and fire of her brain there ran the dominant thought of self-abnegation. Her first duty was towards her husband, to save him from the terrible consequences of his own guilt. Her self-sacrifice must assume a form never contemplated by her as possible—she must sin for him, she must go from her marriage vow, and give him up. In sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, she could not have and hold him, she must not cherish him. She must resign her proper place at his side, her proper office as his comforter and stay and cherisher, to another, against her vow. It must be so. She saw no escape from this, no alternative but one of misery and humiliation for others. One must suffer or many. She would accept the burden, and the sin that attended it. The sacrifice was more than she could bear—or almost more—but she felt that she was bound to bear it. The hours passed, and she could not sleep; she was still thinking, the wheel spinning and tearing in her head, the ring burning and sinking and melting in her heart, and now and then she was aware that her self-command was slipping from her.

The tension was more than her nerves could endure without giving way. That was now her chief terror, lest she should have fever fall on her and sweep her away into unconsciousness.

Where could she hide the ring? What could be done with it? It must not be seen.

When Juliot came down from Loveday's room for the last time that night, she said to her brother, who was waiting anxiously for her report, 'I am not at all satisfied with leaving her alone. I cannot make her out. Poor soul, some acute suffering seems to be endured by her, with a determination not to let it be known of what nature it is nor what is its extent. Yet I cannot be with her. She entreats me to leave her, and she will endure no servant with her. What is to be done?'

'Go to bed, Juliot,' answered Paul. 'Baby is your charge. I will sit up in the parlour under her room, and if she is stirring I shall hear. If she is worse I shall know, and can summon assistance.'

So it was settled. Paul remained awake in the house, reading and meditating in the drawing-room. The spinet was there, but he did

not venture to touch it, lest he should disturb the sick girl above.

The night was as lovely as the day. The sky was without a cloud, and the full moon shone down into the tiny quadrangle into which the windows looked. Paul had the shutters back, so that he could see the moonlight in the court, and could look up to the pure sky and a solitary star that hung in it. On the opposite side of the quadrangle was a window, and an orange gleam from it showed where the baby slept with Juliot, and a rushlight burnt through the hours of darkness.

All in the house were asleep; not a sound had he heard in the room above. He trusted that poor Loveday was also sleeping. The book he had been reading had possessed no interest for him.

His mind wandered from it and would not be arrested by its contents. He sat at the spinet and played on the keys, without sounding them, various airs that came into his memory and harmonised with the tenor of his imaginations. Then he sat in the window, and looked long into the silvery blue sky, at the one star. He did not look at his watch to

note how the night passed, because he was not impatient. Paul was never so content as when alone, in a still house, communing with his thoughts.

After a while he stood up, went into the hall, unlocked the porch door, and took a turn up and down the avenue in the moonlight. He was stiff with sitting still, and felt a little chilled. The great oak gates of the lodge were never fastened. They had been barred every night in the Rover's days, never since. What had Paul to fear?

He did not remain long in the avenue, as he was afraid of being away from his post for more than a few minutes. He returned to the parlour, without locking the hall door, and resumed his place at the window, looking up at the sky and the star.

How long he thus sat, lost in meditation, he did not know. He was roused from it as by an electric shock—he heard a movement in the room overhead. He started to his feet, for he heard a soft tread. He went to the parlour door and listened. The footfall was on the landing; it was descending the stairs. Alarmed, uncertain what to do, what ought to be done,

Paul remained standing in the doorway, holding the latch with his left hand, watching.

Then he saw a white figure issue from the staircase doorway, and walk down the hall slowly. A couple of wax candles were burning in the room behind Paul, and their light shone along the floor and cast his shadow over it. The floor was of slate, but some mats were on it, and a strip of carpet between the porch entrance and the stair door.

There could be no doubt whatever as to who was walking through the hall; there could be no doubt as to her unconsciousness of what she was doing. Had she been awake or in her right mind, she would have seen the candle-light and the man standing watching her, and have shrunk away. She saw nothing; she was ashamed of nothing. She was in her long white dress, as she had lain in bed; she was possessed by one idea, even in her sleep. She held her hands folded one over the other, on her bosom. She looked neither to right nor to left, but walked on. She went direct to the porch doorway, released one hand from its hold on her breast, opened the closed door, and went out.

Then Paul recovered from his amazement. He knew that she was walking in her sleep. He caught from a hook in the hall a large dark cloak that his sister wore in wet weather, and hurried after Loveday. He would not wake her, and cover her with confusion, and fill her with terror. He threw the cloak over her shoulders, and she accepted it as a matter of course, and drew it with the disengaged hand together across her bosom and what she held so tightly and secretly there. She went through the outer court and under the gate-house, and down the avenue; her eyes were wide and fixed before her. She did not turn her head; she did not feel the cold earth and stones under her bare feet. Paul followed her at a little distance. She passed out of the avenue into the lane, and descended the hill till she reached the little spring opposite the gate. There she stood still, and, letting go her hold on the mantle, put forth her right hand to the ash root she had held and leaned on in the evening light. Now the light struck through the gateway as then, but the light was now that of the moon—then, of the sun. Then it had turned all it touched to gold—now, to

silver; then the spring water fell in diamonds —now, in pearls. The lane was overarched with trees, and was therefore in shadow, except at the well, where the gate and gap in the trees allowed the moonlight to flood the road and illumine the bank and falling water. The cloak slipped from Loveday's shoulders to her feet, and in the halo of white effulgence she stood, looking before her with motionless eyes at a frond of maidenhair fern that danced in the air and flashed into a cluster of silver flakes, and then sank back into invisibility. She put her fingers to her neck and drew the gold wedding ring from her bosom, and held it, suspended by its silk thread, spinning and twinkling in the moonlight. Never hasty, never rough, in anything she did, waking or sleeping, she unknotted the string—she did not break it.

Then she sighed, and holding it between her palms, and resting both, closed, on the ash root, she laid her brow on them, and so remained, still as a figure of marble, for full five minutes. Whilst Paul hesitated whether to step forwards and throw the cloak over her again, she raised her head, and, with a rapid

motion, cast the ring from her into the spring.

Then she turned away, and began rapidly to retrace her steps. Paul followed, carrying the mantle, but afraid of touching her. She had done that which she had determined on, and was more likely now to be roused from sleep by a word or a touch. The highest mercy he could show her was to allow her to return to her room unroused.

She did not wake. She went back as she had come, and Paul, when he returned to the parlour, heard her throw herself on her bed. Then all was still.

Paul locked the hall door, and resumed his place at the window. He blew out the candles, and sat thinking till morning broke and the star had passed over the roof beyond his range.

CHAPTER XL.

THE WARP.

For many days Loveday was confined to her bed by nervous fever. She was unconscious, and rambled. But she never uttered one word about her marriage, or named Constantine. She spoke very little, and then concerning her brother, and little Ruth, and domestic arrangements at Nantsillan. The slab of slate weighed on her. What was she to do with it? How many years was she to carry it about with her? Was it always to be on her head, pressing her down?—because it hurt her; it was too heavy for her to bear. Would no one take the slab of slate off her head, or must she bear it till it crushed her into the earth? If so, would someone write on it 'Loveday,' and nothing more, and leave it as her tombstone? Then for hours she lay with her forefinger on her lips, checking herself lest she should say something that must not be said.

'I thought,' said Constantine, 'that you were about to get a companion for Juliot, to save her trouble, and you have given her an additional pack to carry. This comes of boasting, Featherstone. You told me you had secured a treasure. But I suppose you are content that this house should be a hospital.'

'You were nursed in it,' said Paul, with slight reproach in his tone.

'The best thing you can do is to send her about her business as soon as she is well. Juliot has enough to do with the baby, and ought not to be worried with nursing sick women.'

'We did not pack you away.'

'No; I was useful to you. Saved you the rides to Stanbury.'

'And this poor girl will be useful when she is well.'

'I suppose she will not be drawing her salary all the time she is being coddled up?' said Constantine.

Paul did not answer; he stood up, and walked away.

Constantine was in reality very anxious about the condition of Loveday. He stood in

daily terror of her revealing the secret which would consign him to prison. He was not heartless, but he was rendered so for the time by his fear for himself; and, in his desire to screen himself from suspicion, he allowed Paul to regard him as lacking in common charity. His want of feeling, or apparent want of feeling, for the patient, angered Paul Featherstone, who could not forget that his brother-in-law had lain in the same condition, in the same room, less than two years ago, and owed his life to the attentions he and his sister had freely, ungrudgingly given him.

Paul Featherstone did not call in a medical man for Loveday. 'The mind is suffering,' he said, 'and reacts on the body. A surgeon can do nothing. The mind will recover itself presently, and then the body will cast off its fever. Too much wool has been worked over the woof, and the string is strained.'

He visited the sick room every day, and sat some time beside Loveday. Sometimes he stood over her. He never went to her without kneeling by her side and praying, or repeating the psalms of David. His presence always brought her relief. She did not recognise him

when delirious, or speak to him; but she was cooler, calmer, after his visits. He laid his hand on her hot brow, and a stream of soothing influence passed from him to her; the flame in her cheek became less fierce, her restlessness abated.

'If she could cry, she would be better,' said Paul one day, when glimmering consciousness appeared in her eyes. 'Juliot, bring the baby. She seemed to love it. Try whether she will recognise the child. Perhaps the little finger may touch the rock of stone, and the rivers gush forth in dry places.'

Juliot went out, and returned with the little fellow in her arms, placed him on Loveday's bed, and said: 'My dear, I have brought you my baby, little Constantine. Kiss him.'

Then Loveday shuddered, and shrank away with a look of trouble and terror in her face; and as she crouched back against the wall, with her hands extended before her, to hold off the child from touching her, they saw that the experiment had failed. They had done harm, not good, by it. Paul was disappointed and puzzled. He said to Loveday: 'Give me your hand.'

She always obeyed him; she extended her hand to him, and he put his fingers on the pulse; the blood was leaping and hammering in her veins.

'Lie down,' he said.

She submitted.

'Shut your eyes.'

She closed the lids.

'Can you sleep?'

She shook her head slightly.

'I am your master; I order you to sleep. I am your physician; I prescribe sleep. I am your friend; I beseech sleep.'

She unclosed her eyes, looked at him with such anguish in them as to move him grievously. Then she closed her eyes again. He continued to hold her wrist till the pulse became more regular, and then he withdrew.

Next day she was better; the fire was gone from her cheeks. She was very pale, sunken-eyed, and thin, but the light of restored intelligence was in her eyes. She was very weak. A look of settled melancholy, almost of despair, was in her face.

Paul Featherstone again visited her, and this time signed to his sister to leave the room.

He stood—he did not attempt to take a chair—he stood some little way from the bed. He had his hat in his hands; he held it with both in front of him. His back was towards the door and the light of the window, but the reflected light from the white walls and sheet partly illumined his grave, earnest face.

'Miss Penhalligan,' he said, in a low tone, 'I have not much to say to you to-day, and I will not intrude for more than a couple of minutes. I only dare to venture here as your doctor. I have had to deal in this room with two cases, of which yours is one. There has been unconsciousness and fever in both—in the first caused by outward physical wounds, in this by inward wounds dealt to the spirit. I do not know your story, but I know this, that you have had to suffer. The pain of a crushed soul has been yours, and that brought on your illness. The wounds are not healed, the cause of your sorrow not removed. I see in your face that the anguish remains, though the bodily fever is over. I know one thing more. As I told you that the dominant of woman's life is self-sacrifice, so I doubt not that the beginning, the middle, and the ending of this passage of

wild and troubled music has been on the dominant that rules true woman.' He paused. Her eyes were on his, full of entreaty not to ask anything—not to press her to yield up the secret. He quite understood her. 'I ask you nothing. I want to know nothing. That I am right in what I have said I know without asking. This I will assure you for your comfort: you never said a word, in your wildest paroxysms, which conveyed a hint of anything you may wish to keep from us.' He saw a look of relief creep into her eyes. 'But I have not come here to speak about this. I have come to remind you of something you yourself asked me. You said to me that life was an embroidery on canvas, and you accepted what I told you was the woof of woman's life. Have you forgotten what I said was the warp? The strings of that are fixed above—in heaven. Throw the rest of your threads about the warp, and the woof will not give way.' He was silent again for a moment. Then he went on: 'Do you know the constellation of Charles's Wain? It turns and turns for ever, but in all its turnings the two foremost stars ever point in one direction; there-

fore they are called the Pointers. In all the motions of the Wain they never turn a hair-breadth aside—they ever point to the Pole Star. There are many changes and revolutions in life, but each of us has his pointers—the head and the heart, and they will keep him steady if they point ever to the centre of the spiritual sphere.'

Then he bowed and left the room.

A moment after, she heard him at the spinet below, playing and singing:

> As pants the hart for cooling streams,
> When heated in the chase,
> So longs my soul for Thee, O God!
> And Thy refreshing grace.

Then the tears trickled from the eyes of Loveday and moistened her pillow.

CHAPTER XLI.

ANOTHER NOTICE TO QUIT.

CONSTANTINE was engaged all the time that Loveday was ill in forming plans of escape from the dangerous as well as embarrassing situation in which he was placed. None were satisfactory. All rested on the assumption that Loveday would be induced to abandon her rights. But could he hope this? Had he a right to expect it? She was his legitimate wife, and was it likely that she would waive her claim in favour of another woman? That she loved him dearly he knew; but was her love of so unselfish a nature as to induce her to renounce him? Was not love essentially selfish? He had wronged her in the most cruel manner in which wrong could have been done. Was it not probable that the injury done her would transform her love into hatred, and that she would seek revenge? How could she better

chastise him for having deserted her for another than by proclaiming his infamy and exacting legal retribution?

But supposing that she consented not to betray him, would she be able to keep the secret? Would she not be moved, when next she was at Towan, to confide to his mother that he, her best-loved son, her Benjamin, the apple of her eye, was still alive. Would she be able to keep the secret from Gerans, his brother, who had always loved him with a strong, unselfish, fraternal love?

Would she be silent to her own brother, Dennis? If Dennis knew the truth, he would certainly demand redress for his sister's wrongs. He would not be satisfied that his sister should forfeit her position.

Loveday would be writing home, every one in his old parish, all his relations and friends would know where she was, and what more likely than that some one or other of them would drop in at Marsland to see her, for Loveday was an universal favourite. Then, if any one from the old place came to Marsland, the mischief would be done.

He trusted that Loveday had said nothing

to compromise him during her delirium, or nothing that Paul Featherstone and Juliot had understood as compromising to him. If she had used his name in her murmurs, it was possible that the fond Juliot had supposed she was speaking of the child, and flattering herself that the sick girl had already become attached to it. A mother is sufficiently proud and foolish to believe anything, said Constantine.

He could not, however, conceal from himself that Paul did not regard him with the same friendliness as before, and this change in his manner filled him with uneasiness. Did Paul suspect anything? Had he an inkling of an idea that he and Loveday were not absolute strangers to each other? Had Paul noticed his alarm when the name of Penhalligan was mentioned to him? Had Juliot told Paul that it was at sight of him, Constantine, that Loveday had been overcome?

In his fear and desire to allay suspicion Constantine overdid his part. He spoke with heartlessness of the sick woman, and expressed impatience at her illness. This it was which alienated Paul from him. Featherstone suspected nothing, but he was shocked and dis-

gusted at Constantine's lack of generosity, and dearth of sympathy.

Paul's manner became more restrained and cold towards him, and this, instead of inducing Constantine to alter his conduct, drove him to accentuate it.

Loveday had been thinking, quite as much as he, what was to be done. He had considered what was expedient, she what was right.

One day, when Paul was about the farm and Juliot was with the baby in the garden, Constantine took the occasion of being alone in the house with Loveday to talk to her about the future. She was sufficiently recovered to sit in the parlour. He had shunned a short private interview when left alone for a few minutes; it must be painful to both, and could lead to nothing. Now he had his chance, and he seized it.

She was looking deathly white, with bright but sunken eyes; beautiful she always was, her intense sorrow had spiritualised her beauty, and Constantine thought her now more lovely than he had ever done before. He had never lost his affection for her, but his fear for himself had stifled it in his bosom when he saw her again.

She looked at him sadly, with a tinge of fear in her sadness.

'My dear Loveday,' he said, carefully shutting the door behind him, 'I am so glad to see you better, and trust you will soon be well. I have not had a chance before of speaking with you in private, and telling you how anxious I have been whilst you were ill. It has been doubly distressful to me, because I was forced to conceal my feelings.'

She did not interrupt him. She did not curl her lip and wonder whether his anxiety were for himself or for her.

'I have been thinking what is to be done, and I cannot tell. What have you thought?'

'You asked me to be silent till you had come to a resolution. I have kept my word. What do you propose?'

'My dear Loveday, you see the position I am in. It is desperate. I have schemed one thing, then another, and every scheme when built up seems reared on sand, which will shift and let it down.' He was afraid to propose to her any one of his schemes: they all rested on the one base of her self-abnegation, and he had

not the heart—he had sufficient sense of shame not to ask that of her.

'Constantine,' she said, 'what do you offer me?'

'I have no offer to make.'

'And I am to be silent till you have made up your mind?'

'Yes, I entreat you. Some solution will present itself, must do so, but I have not found it yet.'

'Listen to me,' she said, calmly. 'I have had even more time than you for the consideration of this matter. You have had distractions, I have had none; waking, all day I have thought of nothing else; in my bed, unable to sleep, at night, I have had the problem ever before me. Even sleeping it has been present, embarrassing me. I have considered it from every possible point of view; I have disengaged my own interests from it, I have tried to see it, as I might have seen it had it pleased God to take me to Himself. That, perhaps, would have been the simplest way out of the maze, but that it was not to be *the* way God has shown by leaving me here. I was willing enough to go. I clung to life, no, not by a finger end—

but I have been sent back from the door of death with a command to stay. Therefore, Constantine, the puzzle must be riddled out between us.'

'What is to be done?' asked he, distractedly. 'I have tried to discover, and cannot.'

'Perhaps you have looked at it from one narrow point of sight—your interests, or your fancied interests. But we must consider it from another; we must ask, What is right to be done?'

Constantine's heart sank. He was not prepared to think of it thus. Thought of thus there was but one answer.

'You are my husband in the sight of God, and by the law of the land. I am your wife, and Juliot is not. You will allow this.'

'Yes'—reluctantly admitted. 'But, consider——'

'Let me say what I desire, and then you shall speak. The plain, broad right is that you and I live together henceforth as we have sworn to each other. Is it not so?'

He did not answer.

'But,' continued Loveday, 'that has been made impossible by your guilty act. It cannot

be. It never can be. If your guilt is made known, you will be separated from me and from your other wife, equally. Is it not so?'

'Yes, it is; and surely, Loveday, if you have a heart——'

'Let me finish what I have to say. I have thought it all out. It is clear to me now, but I cannot say that it will remain so. I cannot live with you as your wife, and you cannot return to me as my husband, because of your crime. Not only because the law would banish you, but also because my whole nature recoils from it. But, as you are living now, you are in sin. Poor Juliot is guiltless, because she is ignorant; but you are not, and every day that you remain here aggravates your sin, and lessens your chance of pardon and salvation. Is it not so?'

He did not answer.

'Do not think for one moment that I regard Juliot with jealousy. I pity her. I love her. I cannot do other than both admire and love her for her singleness of mind and childlike innocence. She knows nothing of the battles and agonies of life. She has lived here as a nun in a convent, secluded from the knowledge

of evil. Not for the world would I have her faith in goodness shaken by the discovery of the wrong you have done her. I will never, never tell her. I will for ever seal my mouth lest she should know this terrible secret: I would spare her the shame which would crush and kill her; and for her brother's sake—so good, so kind, so pious, and so simple—I would be silent, if there were no other motive to influence me, but——'

Constantine had been breathing freer. At the 'but' he began to shiver with fear again.

'But,' she continued, 'though she must not know the cruelty and feel the disgrace, you must not remain here as her husband. That would be sin. You must go hence.'

'What!' exclaimed Constantine, angrily; 'you would banish me!'

'Not I. You must exile yourself. I will do nothing, I can do nothing, but tell you your duty. Not to come to me—I do not ask, I do not wish that. It will be a pang to Juliot, but an innocent pang—not a degrading torture, like the knowledge of your iniquity. Am I not right?'

'And pray, whither am I to go?'

'That I leave to you.'

'You will swear to me most solemnly not to reveal our marriage to Juliot, to Paul, to any one?'

'I have shown that I can keep silence, and I will keep it. But understand that your father and mother, Gerans, and Rose all know about that. I am now in banishment myself from Nantsillan, for a twelvemonth. At the end of this time I return, and the old Squire will probably recognise my relationship. I will say nothing about you; I will not allow them to suppose, from anything I may say, that you are still alive. Accident, or rather Providence, has brought me here, to startle you out of your security, and tell you your duty. If you neglect to attend to me, Providence may again interfere, not to warn, but to punish.'

'A veiled threat,' muttered Constantine.

'Not at all. Not through me shall you ever suffer.'

He considered. What she said was true; there was always a danger of his being discovered. There were plenty of persons in his own county who knew him; he was known by some in Exeter. He was shut up in a little corner of land—there was danger in leaving it;

he must be for ever in fear of its invasion, and of his recognition. If his previous marriage was known to his father and mother, to Gerans and Rose, it would soon be known to all who cared, and his recognition would lead to his destruction.

'Loveday,' he said, 'you have put this in a new light to me. I admit to you that my conscience has been very uneasy. I have not been happy. I did what was wrong, and then did not know how to undo the wrong. You must give me time to think well over what you have put to me so clearly. And now, as you have pronounced sentence of banishment against me, I must deliver the same to you. You cannot stay here.'

'No,' she answered quietly, 'I do not wish to. Here is a letter I have written to-day to my cousin in Exeter, to ask her to receive me. I was to have gone to her when diverted at Launceston.'

'No one at home knows where you are at present?'

'How can they? I have not written. I have been too ill to write, even if the wish had been in me.'

'I will see to this letter being posted.'

'When I hear from her I will leave. I will leave gladly. To be here is daily suffering. I had written to my cousin from Nantsillan to expect me, but did not wait for an answer; she will have wondered what became of me when I did not arrive.'

'Do not condemn me, Loveday. I have, I have indeed, suffered.'

'I know that you have done very wrong, but I do not condemn you. No one has any right to judge another who has not been subjected to the same temptation.'

'And you will forgive me?'

'I will forgive you freely, heartily, when I am sure that you are repentant.'

'I am that now.'

'When you have left this place I will forgive you.'

Then they heard the voice of Juliot, talking to her baby, as she entered the house from the garden.

Constantine at once left the parlour.

'You have been in to see our patient,' said Juliot. 'She is, indeed, *patient*, which is a joke, as Paul would say. By the way, have

you observed, John, how much graver my brother has become of late? He was wont to be vastly humorous, but now he never jokes. What has come over him, I wonder?'

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